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SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY
C. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

No. 579. FOR WEEK ENDING FEBRUARY 3RD, 1900. [ONE PENNY.

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SHORT STORIES

No 579.] [One Penny.

For the Week Ending February 3rd, 1900.

HOW THE VICOMTE WON HIS WIFE.

The Marquis de Rochemont and the Baron von Sternberg were deadly enemies, therefore it was the more unfortunate that Sternberg Castle should have been situated on a hill which overlooked the Chateau Rochemont. Some people thought that this very thing might be the cause of the ill-feeling which existed between them, and that the Marquis resented being looked down upon by a German baron, but then other people always do know so much more about one's private affairs than one does oneself.

The true cause of their enmity was to be found in a story which reached back two hundred years, when the great-grandfather of the Frenchman had been one of the favourite courtiers of the Grand Monarch, whilst the Baron's ancestor at the same period had followed the despicable calling of a paid spy, and being caught in the act of conveying some private correspondence of a compromising nature, (which had been stolen from Her Majesty's secretaire) Monsieur le Marquis had, to prevent any scandal, and at the Queen's request, killed him with his own hand.

This blot on his escutcheon the Baron could not forget, nor for the matter of that did the Marquis.

EDITED BY C. Arthur Pearson

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There were two ways of reaching Sternberg Castle, one wound up along the mountain side, the other and shorter route being through a forest and up a steep path. This latter however was never used by the Sternbergs, for the forest formed part of the Rochemont domain.

In one respect the Marquis and the Baron were alike, each had an only child, and as fate willed it, the Marquis had a son, whilst the German's family was represented by the Baroness Ernestine. Curiously enough, though such near neighbours, it chanced these two had never met, though now Henri was of age, and Ernestine had almost reached her eighteenth year.

The Marquis was a student by nature, never happy save when devouring musty records, and his ineptitude for business affairs had resulted in his being greatly imposed upon.

Henri de Beauville had just reached home after a tour round the world, found that his father's property needed a master's eye, and was wondering whether he could ever bear the monotony of living ten months in the year at Rochemont, as he lay one day, soon after his return, under one of the pine trees in the forest.

Whilst thus brooding, he heard a sound which made him start; it was a woman's voice, a pure soprano singing "Elizabeth's Song of Greeting" out of *Tannhäuser*.

Now Henri was devoted to music, and in his many travels he missed few opportunities of attending any of the great opera houses, yet he was fain to acknowledge that never before had he heard Wagner so exquisitely rendered, as by this unknown stranger. He almost feared to breathe lest the spell should be broken.

Presently the singer came into view.

Presently the singer came into view; she was a tall, slender girl with wonderful golden hair and eyes which looked from under dark lashes with the far-away gaze of one inspired. From whence had she come, this stranger, and how could he attract her notice? Hardly had this thought come into his mind, than Fortune seemed to favour him, for at that moment she stumbled against a root in the path and fell. He darted forward and lifted her from the ground. She started violently and appeared filled with terror, then with the quick reaction of a child gave vent to a peal of laughter, which was if possible more bewitching than her song.

As she freed herself from his arms and quickly recovered her composure, she asked to whom she was indebted for the timely aid she had received.

"Henri de Beauville at your service," answered the young Vicomte. At these apparently harmless words Henri was distressed to see another startled look in those wonderful eyes.

"Ah, it is clear you do not know who I am, or you would not have aided me so kindly, Vicomte. I am Ernestine von Sternberg, the daughter of your father's enemy."

"Impossible!" ejaculated the young man horror-struck, for with the impulsiveness of youth he had already made up his mind that this was the one woman in the world for him, yet the family feud—bah! he cared not, these things could not last for ever. And after all only the two families knew of the skeleton in the Sternberg cupboard, so quickly recovering himself, he added:

"Baroness, now that I know your name, let me repeat that now and ever I am at your service."

Ernestine laughingly gave him her hand, which he raised to his lips with all the grace of a scion of generations of courtiers. For her part she was charmed at this encounter, she had so often heard of the Vicomte, but never imagined him like this, why, he was more like an Englishman if it had not been for his manners.

"I shall not dare to tell my father that I have seen you," she went on, "he has forbidden me ever to enter the wood, but it looked so cool and inviting this hot afternoon, and indeed I did not know you were home," she added playfully.

"I am very glad you did not, since it has led to our meeting," was the grave reply, "but please do not let me drive you away from the shade, or I shall feel that I am the trespasser. Let me show you an even cooler retreat."

To this engaging invitation she gaily acquiesced, her conviction that she ought not to, being overcome by a spirit of mischief. He found that she had spent two years at an English school, which accounted for her natural manners, so unlike the usual primness of German girls, and this gave her an added charm in his eyes.

Indeed they found they had so many things to talk about, that it was an hour later when they parted, not however before Henri had begged Ernestine not to discontinue her walks on his account.

She went off with a merry twinkle in her blue eyes, muttering to herself what sounded very like, "Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?" but of this Henri could not be sure.

When he reached the Chateau, he acquainted his father with his intention of giving up travelling for the present at any rate, and settling down to overhaul the estate.

The Marquis was delighted, and after thanking him, added:

"Henri, my boy, you must marry, for remember the hopes of the House of Rochemont centre upon you."

"Well, father, what do you say to my calling on the Baron von Sternberg, and asking for his daughter's hand? The two properties would go well together," suggested Henri.

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"Henri de Beauville, your jest is misplaced, for you know that never will a living Sternberg come under my roof. A Rochemont mates not with the descendant of a spy," and the old man's voice shook with anger.

This showed the Vicomte pretty plainly that should he in time be able to win Ernestine, stratagem would have to be exercised in order that his father might recognize the marriage.

In spite of their dread that their respective parents might discover their movements, and perhaps on Ernestine's side because of the added zest it gave, the young people continued to meet in the wood daily, until the time arrived that Henri felt he could no longer hold his peace, but must proclaim his love.

So it came to pass that one September afternoon, about three weeks from the day they first met, as they wandered through the woods side by side, Henri poured out his love for her, and asked her to become his wife. Very handsome he looked as he stood there before her, the last gleams of the sun playing on his fair hair, and silhouetting the manly form against the dark green of the forest trees. So at least thought Ernestine, as she listened to his passionate words. There was a pause and then the girl looked up, right into her lover's eyes, and let him read his answer in her own, and after that there was for a space, a silence too eloquent for words.

"Henri," at last said Ernestine, looking up again, "I can never tell my father, he would never forgive me, and nothing would make him consent to our marriage. Why he is so bitter against your family I cannot think, and he will never tell me."

"Quite right of him darling, it's an old story dating back two hundred years, surely it has lived in the memory of the two houses long enough. But, dear heart, I am not one whit better off than you are, for my father has vowed that never shall the Baroness Ernestine von Sternberg cross his threshold alive," added Henri ruefully.

"What are we to do then? Ah! Henri, I cannot bid you farewell, my love, for you are part of my very existence," and the girl nestled closer in his arms.

"My little sweetheart, do you think that I will let all the fathers in the world come between us? No, indeed, we must bring diplomacy to bear upon the case. Listen!" and he unfolded to her the elaborate plan he had thought out during the last few days, when he hardly yet dared to hope that he might win her love.

"It is a great thing to ask of you, darling, but I think it is the only plan by which my father can be induced to recognise you as my wife. Are you brave enough to try?"

"Henri, I love you," was the girl's only reply.

Apparently the Vicomte found it a satisfactory one, for they agreed to carry out their scheme a few days later, when the two friends he had summoned to Rochemont should have arrived.

So they parted with a last farewell till the next evening should come, when Henri would meet her to tell her further of the plot he proposed and to make the final arrangements.

L'Abbé Beaupaire had formerly been a tutor of the Vicomte's, and loved him dearly, so that when the letter from Henri reached him asking for his help and a visit to the château, he immediately repaired thither with all speed.

As to his other friend, Edward Cary, the young doctor was delighted at the prospect of staying at an old French château, and renewing his friendship with Henri

As they wandered through the wood side by side, Henri poured out his love for her.

de Beauville, in whose company he had passed many a pleasant hour in London. M. le Marquis welcomed his son's friends with his own courtly grace, and then begged them to excuse him for that evening as he was in the midst of a translation of the Assyrian inscription on a tablet recently brought him from the East.

Nothing could have been better. The Vicomte explained how matters stood between himself and Ernestine, and entreated his friends' aid in carrying out his plot.

The Abbé listened gravely, asking a question in his keen way at such times as the plan seemed too involved, whilst the younger man waited for him to speak first.

"Henri, my son, is this lady a good Catholic?"

"Surely you know had she not been, my father, I had not dared ask you here to marry us," replied the Vicomte with a smile.

"It is well, and surely to heal this feud would be a good deed," said the priest thoughtfully, as he looked up at this eager boy. "Yes," he said at last, "I am willing to play my part in this ghastly farce, but what says our friend here?" and he turned towards the Englishman.

"Henri, old man," answered the Doctor, "I like your spirit, and will declare you mad till I am black in the face, since that seems to be the part assigned to me. But the Baroness, who will prepare her for her weird betrothal?"

"You and I between us, Ted. Have you any drug, which will to all appearance render her dead for the space of half an hour?"

"Yes I have, and luckily it happens to be in the

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medicine chest I always carry about with me. But won't the lady object to a stranger experimenting on her?"

"Not when that stranger happens to be my friend. Beside, she approves of my plan, and places herself entirely in our hands, darling that she is," added the Vicomte fervently.

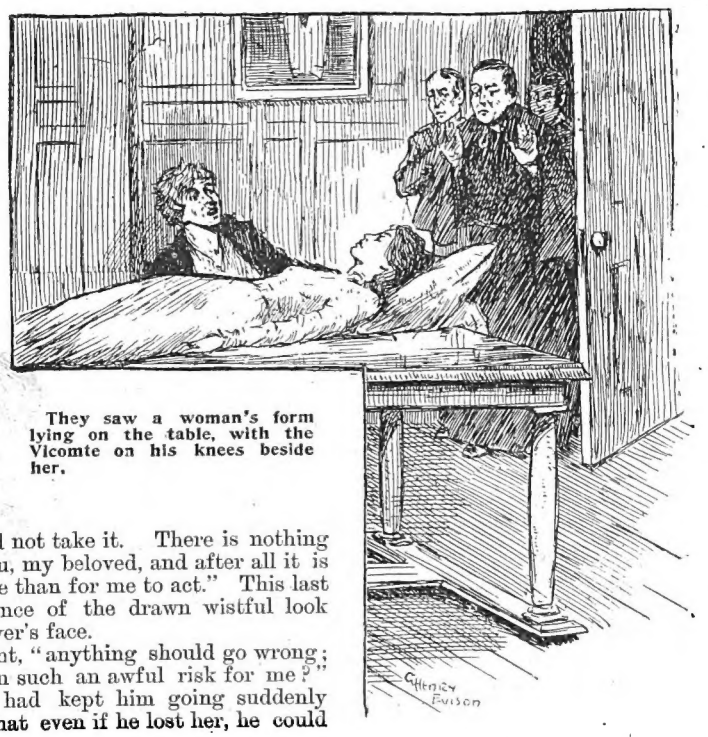
So it chanced that two days later, the Vicomte and his English guest shouldered their guns and went into the forest.

There they were met by the Baroness, looking lovelier than ever in a dress of the finest white embroidered muslin, confined at her waist by a belt of solid silver, made like a curb chain. She was paler than was her wont, the tension of what she was about to do, having told upon her nerves.

When Henri introduced her to Edward Cary, that gentleman came to the conclusion that his friend had shown uncommonly good taste in his selection of the future Marquise.

After the greeting was over, Edward and the Abbé, who had joined them, discreetly walked on, leaving the two lovers together.

"Henri, is there really no other way?" the girl asked anxiously. "But no, if there were I could not take it. There is nothing I would not dare for you, my beloved, and after all it is far harder for you to see than for me to act." This last she added in consequence of the drawn wistful look which came over her lover's face.



They saw a woman's form lying on the table, with the Vicomte on his knees beside her.

"Suppose," he thought, "anything should go wrong; can I really let her run such an awful risk for me?" The excitement which had kept him going suddenly collapsed, and he felt that even if he lost her, he could not carry out his plan.

As his courage failed, hers, with true womanliness, rose, and calling to his friends she asked that the last explanations and instructions might be given her, and the attempt made as soon as possible. In vain did Henri protest, she motioned to Dr. Cary to take no notice of him, but to proceed with what he was saying.

"We will take great care of you, Baroness. It's awfully plucky of you, I think," ended Edward, after he had made it all plain.

"Thank you, Mr. Cary, I feel sure I can trust you," replied the girl, then turning with a bright smile to her betrothed, she added "I am quite ready to be taken off by force now, if M. L'Abbé will get out of sight, but remain in earshot." The Abbé bowed and withdrew further into the wood, whilst Ted Cary murmured in low tones:

"Please, Baroness, remember that once you pass the château gates, your heart fails and you die. I shall inject the drug the moment we put you down, and the effects will last exactly half-an-hour."

Henri now besought the girl to fly with him, and on her answering with a decided negative, he motioned to his friend, and advanced to carry her off by force. In the struggle Henri's gun went off, giving him a slight flesh wound, then Edward stooped over the girl, and bound a handkerchief round her wrists, whilst the Vicomte lifted her in his arms despite her struggles and cries for aid.

No sooner had they got inside the château, than Henri having deposited his prisoner on a table, the doctor proceeded to inject the fluid, which in five minutes produced a rigidity indistinguishable from death.

Henri meantime had been divesting himself of his collar and tie, rumpling his hair, and altogether assuming the appearance of one distraught with grief.

In response to his cries and groans footsteps began to be heard, and as had been arranged the Abbé, accompanied by two servants, hurried into the room. All three held up their hands in horror as they saw a woman's form lying stark and stiff on the table, with the Vicomte on his knees beside her apparently out of his mind.

"My son, what has happened, what are you doing?" asked the priest, then as Henri vouchsafed no reply, save a groan, he turned to the Englishman for an explanation.

"Our friend has lost his heart to this lady, and meeting her in the wood, tried to persuade her to marry him, and on her refusal he seemed to lose his head, and nothing I could say or do would prevent his lifting her up in his arms and carrying her off here by force. Now, poor fellow, as you can see he is frantic, for the shock has proved too much for the girl's heart, and he has killed the one he loved best in the world."

The Abbé could scarcely speak for emotion, but inquired if they knew who the lady was.

They answered in the negative.

"Then we must let the body remain in the large hall till we have made inquiries," said the Abbé.

With great difficulty they made the Vicomte understand that they were not going to separate him from his beautiful victim for the present. The servants approached to raise the body, but their master waived them aside angrily, only consenting to let Edward help him with his sad burden.

Tenderly they bore the rigid body of the girl to the hall, a priest going to tell the Marquis of the tragedy.

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They laid the fair form on a sofa, and it was thus the Marquis saw it as he followed the Abbé. Henri was crouched down on the floor beside it, muttering "Death shall not rob me of you, you *shall* be my bride, you *shall* I say."

Edward Cary stood looking on for some minutes, and then crossed over to where the Marquis was standing, and told him that he feared his son's reason would be permanently lost if his strange whim was not humoured. The old man turned helplessly to the Abbé.

"Monsieur is right, my friend. With your consent I will ease Henri's mind, by reading the marriage service over him and this lady."

"Yes, yes," cried the heartbroken father, "anything to comfort my poor boy."

The Abbé raised Henri from beside the apparent corpse, and explained to him in low tones that he would marry him as he desired, but that they did not know the girl's name.

"Ernestine von Sternberg," came the startling reply.

The Marquis made a gesture of dissent, but was soothed into acquiescence by Edward Cary, and the weird ceremonial began.

There was a pause whilst the Marquis pulled off his late wife's wedding ring from his finger, and gave it with trembling hand to the Abbé.

The doctor perceiving signs of returning animation, made a sign to the priest to get on with the service. Scarcely had Henri spoken the words making her his wife, than Ernestine's eyes opened and rested on his face. His appearance seemed to revive her memory, for when the Abbé addressed the question to her, whether she would take Henri de Beauville to be her wedded husband all the company present, excepting those who were in the secret, were electrified by hearing a faint "I will" come from her they had until that moment believed to be gone past recall. Henri slipped the ring on to her finger, and the Abbé without a moment's pause, pronounced them man and wife, before the Marquis had recovered from his astonishment sufficiently to interfere.

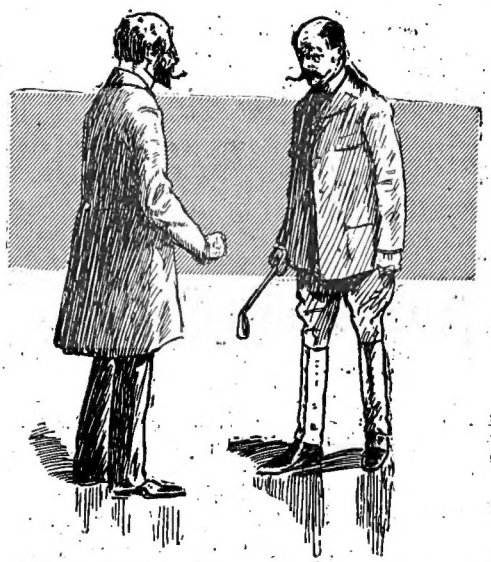
Henri still remained kneeling by her side, with a semi-dazed expression. Now the deed was done his mind seemed hardly able to grasp the fact that the great stake was over, and Ernestine indeed his wife. The girl herself was the first to recover.

"Henri," she whispered, "is it really all over, and am I indeed your wife?"

For all answer he took her in his arms, and held her there before them all. "Father," he cried, "do not be angry with me. I love Ernestine with all my heart, and could marry no other woman, but you told me she should never enter your doors alive, so we were forced to fall back upon stratagem, and now, my father, let me present you to Madame la Vicomtesse de Beauville."

For an instant the old man hesitated, then as the girl knelt at his feet in her pure white bridal robe that matched the colour of her face, he raised her gently, and taking her in his arms kissed her on the forehead, afterwards turning to his son with outstretched hand, and a smile on his proud old face, saying, "Henri, my son, I forgive you, I once was young myself, and know full well that I should have lost my heart to Madame la Vicomtesse, had I chanced to meet her then,"—this with a courtly bow to Ernestine.

"Ah, father, you are too good to us," rejoined the young man gratefully, "and you, my friends, how can I thank you for the help you gave us."



"M. le Marquis, it shall be as you wish."

A few moments later the great bell resounded through the chateau, and who should be standing outside but the Baron von Sternberg himself. Someone had seen his daughter go down to the forest, and heard the scuffle, then creeping to where the sound came from, had seen the girl carried off by force, and had fled up to the castle to carry the news.

The Marquis, taking his daughter-in-law by the hand led her to the furious Baron, who mindful only of the fact that she was alive and unhurt, clasped her to his bosom again and again.

As soon as she could speak, Ernestine turned towards her husband, and beckoned him to her side.

"Father, let me introduce you to your son."

"To my what?" exclaimed the Baron.

"Permit me to explain," here interposed the Marquis. "Both you and I, Baron, have been fairly tricked by these two young people, who it seems fell in love with each other, but since they are now united by Holy Church, as M. l'Abbé will testify, shall we not bury the hatchet of which only you, myself and my son have cognisance, and for the future strive only in friendly rivalry as to which is the more important, the perfecting of scientific discoveries, or the deciphering of ancient tablets?" for the Baron was well known in scientific circles.

Henri here put in his word.

"Father," and the bewildered Baron started at hearing such a title fall from the Vicomte's lips addressed to him. "Father, you have gained a son as well as kept a daughter, if you will have it so."

"I don't seem to have any choice left," answered Von Sternberg at length, half grimly, then turning to the Marquis he extended his hand, adding:

"M. Le Marquis, it shall be as you wish, and indeed I am sensible of the honour you have conferred on me."

"And now, gentleman, what think you of a rubber of whist, while Henri and his wife have time to talk over these wonderful events, and congratulate themselves on ending a feud which has lasted already far too long," replied the Marquis.

M. Hoey.

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A CRIMINAL BARRISTER.

THIS story, in the main, is appropriated; having been published some thirty years ago. But, before branding me with the odious crime of plagiarism, I would ask the reader to hear the story to the end. Then, should he consider me deserving, let him apply the brand, burning the mark deeply, that others may avoid me in future. I shall, however, feel amply repaid, whatever the public judgment, for having been the means of giving to the world for the first time the true facts in one of the most interesting criminal cases that ever came before the courts, the *dénouement* to which reveals an instance of resort to the lowest depths of duplicity and perfidy in the history of crime, involving the character of one whose name was almost a household word, and whose career is cited, even to this day, as one representing all that is exemplary in that which constitutes a life of integrity, honesty and uprightness of character.

The story as it first appeared was entitled; "A Criminal Barrister; or, the Beginning of a Successful Career." Just why the author should have made use of the words "A Criminal Barrister," always remained a mystery to me, as the title could in no general way be considered appropriate to the tale. But the reading between the lines stood out like a revelation when I came into possession of the key. The story is given here, somewhat abbreviated, but the main facts are as originally written.

* * * * *

On March 13th, 1855, there was added to the large list of barrister's names outside No. 10 Pump Handle Court, that of "J. A. Baldwin," and thus marked the beginning of my legal career.

Several months passed, during which time I had not secured a single case in the courts. I began seriously to doubt the wisdom of my having chosen the law as a profession, when, as is often the case, the unexpected happened and my opportunity came.

One night in a town in Kent, which shall be nameless, a policeman heard a woman's scream in the vicinity of an archway for foot passengers only, under the railway, which here was very broad. Hastening in the direction of the alarm, the officer found near the entrance of the archway, a young man, kneeling over the prostrate form of a young woman. As he came up to them he heard the young man utter in an undertone these words:

"Oh, Helen, how I loved you, and how often you have spurned that love; but your lips will never say those cruel words again."

The woman was found to be dead and the man was arrested, charged with her murder.

The young man proved to be my old friend, George Grier. We had been at the University together and occupied adjacent rooms for over three years. I knew that Grier was innocent—utterly incapable of such a brutal, cowardly crime. Circumstances were overwhelming against him, however, but I resolved when I was asked to act in his defence to save him from paying the penalty of a crime with which he was charged.

I set to work upon the case without a shred of evidence as to his innocence, save the general good character he had always borne, and my absolute knowledge of his utter incapability of the crime.

At the coroner's inquest the following facts bearing upon the case were elicited. The woman had died instantly—the condition of the blood proving this. On the right side of the head and directly over the ear was a contusion, the result, apparently, of a blow from some blunt instrument. The body had not been robbed or otherwise disturbed and was still warm and limp when found by the policeman. Grier had been known to have sought the young lady's company, but had not been favourably received. They had quarrelled the same evening that the tragedy occurred.

Grier had been seen by a railway ganger, who recognised him, to enter the archway from the upper side a few minutes before the young woman passed through. There had been no one else seen near the spot for some little time.

The officer who effected the arrest testified as to the manner in which he discovered the crime, and the facts as previously related. He also produced a loaded cane which Grier acknowledged belonged to him and which he had carried with him at the time he was arrested. The head of the cane, it was shown, would doubtless produce just such a contusion as that found on the head of the dead woman, if used with sufficient force.

Grier acknowledged that he and the young woman had had a misunderstanding that evening, and had parted with angry words. This, he stated, also accounted for his passing through the archway alone that evening. He had always made it a practice to accompany the young woman when she was late returning home, but as their disagreement would not admit of it on this occasion, he had preceded her to the archway and waited in the vicinity until he should see that she had passed safely through.

Passing through to the lower side, he had sat down upon some planks which were lying near. While sitting there he was startled by hearing a woman scream in the archway. Suspecting it to be her for whom he was waiting, he ran to the entrance and at the same moment the young lady came running out and fell at his feet.

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Thinking at first that she had swooned he had tried to restore her to consciousness, but failing in this, he had just discovered that she was dead when the officer came up. His grief at the sad discovery accounted for the words he uttered, which the officer had overheard.

The evidence produced was considered sufficient, however, and Grier was committed for trial to the assizes charged with the murder of the young woman. The trial was set down for October 15th, which left but two weeks in which to secure evidence and prepare my case.

During those two weeks I made frequent visits to the scene of the tragedy and held many consultations with my friend Grier as well as with his solicitor.

As a result of my investigations I went quietly to the office of the county analyst on the day preceding the trial, and taking him with me, went to the coroner's office. Here I related the results of my investigations, and after a consultation upon the matter, the remains of the dead girl, which had been placed in the public morturay pending the trial, were quietly examined, and an affidavit stating the results of this examination signed by the county analyst and the coroner, placed in my hands.

On the following day at the hour set for the trial the court-room was packed with eager spectators, anxious to know the out-come, as the case was completely shrouded in mystery. Scarcely a person in the entire court-room believed Grier guilty; yet the evidence was so strongly against him that no one could see how he could be acquitted.

The witnesses for the prosecution corroborated the evidence produced at the coroner's inquest, and wove a chain of circumstantial evidence about Grier which seemed certain to place his head in the hangman's noose. As the witnesses were turned over, one by one, to me for cross-examination, they were asked but one question:

"Do you know of anything derogatory to the character of the accused, prior to this charge having been made against him?"

The answers to this question were all to the effect of proving that Grier enjoyed an unblemished character. But the spectators began to grow nervous at this apparent lack of effort upon my part to break the chain of evidence which was gradually being forged about him, and were chafiing under the intense suspense.

At last the evidence for the prosecution was concluded and the time of the defence came to produce their witnesses. I rose, and facing the judge, stated with a feeling of intense earnestness and solemnity:

"My Lord, and Gentlemen of the Jury:

"The defence has no witnesses, save Him who witnesseth all things and judgeth all things."

As I sat down the hum of excitement rose to a clamour; the people in the court-room climbed up in their seats and pushed and jostled one another in their efforts to get a little nearer the dramatic scene.

Order being restored, the counsel for the prosecution rose and began his speech. Evidently thinking he had it all his own way, and that through my inexperience or lack of confidence I feared to make an effort in the face of the strong case of circumstantial evidence he had produced, his address was but a short one.

When he had finished I rose and told the story that had been burning in my heart for many days.

"My Lord and Gentlemen of the Jury:

"Before you is a young man charged with the murder of a young woman, for whom he would have willingly yielded up his life to save from harm. Even now he stands in the shadow of the gallows whose cruel noose the prosecution would gladly tighten round his neck for a crime of which he is as innocent as the prattling babe at its mother's breast, and of which not one word of evidence has been produced to prove him guilty.

"True, they will tell you that it is circumstantial evidence; yea, evidence which is no evidence at all. Oh, humanity, whence art thou fled? When will men learn to be human? Is it meet that we should barter away a human soul upon the narrow shreds of supposition? Were it not that I have been intimately associated with this young man for many years and know him wholly incapable of the fiendish crime he is charged with, and knowing this, have laboured almost day and night since his arrest to thwart the design of those who would place the noose about his neck, his life would this day doubtless have been bartered into eternity without a twinge of compunction.

"But I thank Heaven that the facts have come into my possession which will save the life of an innocent man and spare the country the ignominy and disgrace of that most heinous crime—legal murder.

"On that memorable night when the tragedy occurred which resulted in the death of Helen Vance and the arrest of the accused before you, two lovers had had a misunderstanding. The young lady had to pass through a lonely archway at a late hour and the young man who had, previous to the quarrel, always accompanied her through this archway, because he wished to protect her from possible harm, passes through it a few minutes before the usual time for her to do so and awaits in the vicinity until she shall pass through in safety.

"A few minutes later, she enters the archway from the upper side. Being alone and the archway dark and lonely, she naturally feels timid. As she hastens through she suddenly hears footsteps following her. She screams and runs out, only to see in the dim light afforded by the gas lamp, another man rush at her from the opposite direction.

"She faints and falls to the ground. Her head strikes a sharp cobble stone and makes a contusion.

"A miniature sword which she wears as an ornament in her hat, pierces her temple, breaking off close to the skull and under the skin, which quickly closes over the puncture, leaving no tell-tale mark to show its location. The steps she heard following her in the archway, were but an echo of her own, which can be proven to anyone wishing to visit the archway and make the test. The man whom she saw as she emerged was her friend, the prisoner at the bar, who was hastening to her aid in response to her scream of terror. Here is the hilt of the little sword hat-pin, which I found firmly embedded between the cobble stones where she fell, and which has been identified by several of the dead girl's friends; and here is an affidavit, signed by the county analyst and the coroner, under date of yesterday, telling you, Gentlemen of the Jury, that if you will go to the mortuary where the casket containing the remains of the dead girl now lies, you may see the other portion of this sword firmly embedded in the temple of the corpse, a mute but indisputable witness to the fact that Helen Vance met her death by accident.

"If she had been struck on the head by a loaded cane, as claimed by the prosecution, she would have fallen upon the left side, the blow having been struck upon the right where the contusion was found, and there would have been marks on the left side to show where the head struck the rough cobble stones. On the contrary, the

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body when found was lying upon the right side, where both the contusion and the embedded hat-pin are to be found.

"In conclusion, my Lord and gentlemen of the jury, I wish to reiterate that not a single word of direct evidence has been produced to convict the prisoner at the bar of the murder of Helen Vance, and consequently there remains nothing for you to do but acquit him of the charge."

Amid thunderous applause I stepped up to the judge and handed him the affidavit and the broken hilt of the miniature sword. After examining both carefully for a few moments, the counsel for the prosecution was asked to close his case.

Rising to his feet the counsel stated that the prosecution was ready to let the case go to the jury as it stood. The judge instructed the jury in a few brief words, reminding them that they were to render their verdict in accordance with the facts given in evidence.

The twelve men filed into the jury room like so many grim and silent spectres. Five minutes later they returned, and upon being asked by the judge what verdict they wished to render, replied:

"Not guilty."

Amid a clamour that it was impossible to subdue, Grier was told he was a free man.

Thus ended the dramatic proceedings of my first case. Friends and strangers alike crowded about me and my friend Grier, and offered warm words of congratulation. From that day the star of my legal career was ever in the ascendant; and not many years later I found myself occupying the judge's bench in the same court where I won my first laurels.

* * * * *

This, in brief, is the story as told by Mr. Justice Baldwin some thirty years ago. But ah, what a different story reads between the lines.

During the last fifteen years of the judge's life I was his private secretary, and as such gained much information that led me to suspect that he held some secret which weighed heavily upon his mind. From ill health he was compelled to give up the bench while yet a comparatively young man. Having never married, the judge had no family to look after his personal wants, and as he grew more feeble my duties partook largely of the nature of body servant.

His mind grew weak and he would frequently wander in his thoughts, dropping fragments of strange speech now and then concerning his past, which I felt it would be wrong to encourage him to divulge, considering the weak state of his mind.

One morning some ten years ago as I entered his room, I found him sitting stark and stiff in his chair, his eyes wide open and staring fixedly at the ceiling. About him, scattered upon the floor, were the fragments of a photograph, which I found by placing the pieces together, to be that of Grier, the friend of his youth. On a small table at his side was an empty phial labelled "Prussic Acid." Beside it lay a slip of paper with these words written across it in a straggling, scrawling hand:

"Thus ends the last chapter of a Criminal Barrister." The word "Criminal" was heavily underscored in a manner strangely suggestive.

In his will he left all his property and personal effects to me, and with the will was a sealed package with instructions that it was not to be opened until five years after his death.

The five years have passed, and with them another five. The contents of that strange package have haunted my life and I have at last determined to give them to the world and thus unburden my mind of a secret that is weighing my own life down.

It was a confession, pitiful in its hopelessness, sad in its bitterness of repentance, of the double crime of shielding a known murderer from the punishment which he so richly deserved, for the purpose of furthering his own interests by making a reputation for himself.

It reviewed the history of Grier's case, stating that Grier had confessed to him that he murdered Helen Vance out of revenge for her having jilted him; that he waylaid her at the archway, and when she appeared, struck her with the loaded cane, and then to cover up his crime, drove the miniature sword into her temple, broke it off and placed the hilt between the cobble stones in a manner to make it appear she had fallen upon it; that together they had planned the whole dramatic plot, which by the power of a cunningly devised case of circumstantial evidence, cleared Grier and won a fame for himself that hung about his neck as a millstone and kindled a fire of remorse within his heart that had burned up his life with the fury of a thousand demons.

The document was signed:

"Jas. A. Baldwin,
"Criminal Barrister."

K. N. Vernon.

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A SKETCH OF A DULL TOWN.

It was November weather, and the streets of Yawdon were standing in dense puddles of wet, that shivered as the black North-easter struck their surface, driving up the exposed level of the town.

The wind whipping the faces of the passers-by, shrieked out to its victims the meaning of winter time in England, mocking them for their inability to take wing for the sun-kissed shores of the Mediterranean, where the North-easter never blows.

If it had not been for the great fishing industry that absorbed the whole of Yawdon town, the place might well have been described in the caustic language of the porter at the Albert Docks, whose tongue is as graphic as his contempt of the place is keen.

"Lor', this yere place, was you a saying? Why it was a second thought of Mrs. Nature, when she fancied as the Thames was too cheerful looking.

"Do I like living here? Well, I don't know as how I do, leastways I ain't never bothered with folks stravaging round inquiring for houses or lodgings.

"You should have seen a gent off one of these yere P. & O. boats as got left here by mistake. Lor'! you'd a thought as I had exploded a quick match under his feet when the train came in at last, after he'd eaten all the sandwiches at the inn, and smoked his last cigar, and had nothin' to do but sit and look at the Docks."

People drifted to Yawdon sometimes, but the charity of the place was so overwhelming, that until their neighbours had grown entirely accustomed to them; the aliens were always furtively considered either to be given over to intemperance, or to be on the verge of bankruptcy—and were treated accordingly.

The town was not famous for its beauty, being of a dull red colour, with a uniform taste in the shape of its houses. And the streets that did not reek of herrings, smelt of crowded humanity living in narrow rows packed as closely together as the herrings themselves in their barrels.

But away beyond the town, where the broad valley of the waters lies, stretching for miles along the level plain of the land, there is peace and beauty.

In the summer, these waters are the haunts of grebe and coot, and rare birds that nest where the trees hang low down to the hedges of the Broads, and whisper to the bright-eyed water rats on the bank, till the whirr of a steam launch, or the shriek of a boat-load of yelling humanity from the East-end of London, sets the senses of nature jarring.

But those Broads in the winter, under the flame of the sunset sky, with the crisp touch of frost upon the naked trees; the sharp etched body of an heron cleaving its heavy flight across the mere, are a very world of loneliness.

The shiver of the reeds, the scrape of the brown branches against each other; the whistle of the wind in the sedges, are scarcely broken by the advent now and again of a slow moving barge, with bellying red sail—or the call of some woman from the bank, as she summons home the cows from the lowlying pastures.

Once there drifted to Yawdon, on the wings of circumstance or fate, a woman.

She took up her abode quietly, at the extreme end of a street that was frankly uninteresting.

Since it seemed at first that she matched the street, no one troubled themselves about her in any way. She was merely an atom of society wreckage, unprofitable to Yawdon.

In course of time, the loneliness of her life, and the constant companionship of a sorrow that was eating out her heart, drove her mad.

Discovering this, the boys of the town, filled with all the sympathy of a certain class of childhood for affliction wrecked the front of her house with well-aimed bullets of stones and mud.

Seeing that she was the centre of a persecution that did not seem likely to come to an end, she made a barricade for herself of soap boxes and matchwood, plastering up doors and windows, in the front of the cottage, with

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such mortar as she could procure from the road scrapings. And from thence forward she took refuge in the attics.

The sight of this extraordinary fortress, naturally lowered the rents in Murchiston Road, and several of its inhabitants, who had never known what it was to have lunatics in their own families, left for saner climes.

In the fine weather, Mrs. Longford could be seen walking in her little garden clad in a scarlet wrapper, carrying a tin shovel which she wielded as a weapon of defence in case of a sudden onslaught from the youth of Yawdon.

Sometimes she coaxed the little children into her gate—for she was harmless, and none had reason to fear her—and made them a feast on the lawn consisting of a pound of sugar, eaten out of a rare Worcester bowl, with a silver spoon, fashioned like a stork.

She spoke sometimes, but her voice was harsh, and she seemed to be always seeking for words that might express the blank misery of her eyes. But the little children of Yawdon loved her, for they alone had seen what those two attic rooms contained, store houses of secrets as they were.

Once one of the babies babbled to its mother of the toys that hung on the walls, of the whip and the rocking horse, the suit of boys clothes always kept brushed for use upon the chair, of the picture of the child above the bed, with the yellow hair and bright beautiful face.

And that happy mother, recognising a tragedy in the child's innocent story, sent her little Alsie, with a cake and a pot of jam to the barricaded house, a gift that woke the first smile in the desolate face that had rested there for many weary years.

Soldiers are not regarded with particular favour in Yawdon, especially by that particularly respectable portion of society that dwells in Murchiston Road.

But since there was a depôt in the town, Tommy Atkins was looked upon as a necessary evil, and a source of some profit to the ratepayers, though at the same time, naturally, an object of contempt.

Therefore it chanced that when a gunner in full uniform drifted up the road, it behoved everyone to turn out to look at such an unusual sight.

He must have some interest in the place, seeing that he was scanning each particular house with puzzled keenness. And immediately every dovecote was fluttered to discover what particular family owned its skeleton in the cupboard in the shape of a soldier son.

It is of course far more respectable to weigh out sugar and tea over a counter, or to drive a tram through wet or shine, than to be compelled to wear a coat that is suggestive of the poorhouse, since it is given as one may say in charity by the country, and is similar to that worn by hundreds of other men.

And therefore when the soldier pulled up with a jerk at the barricaded house of Mrs. Longford, it was with a sigh of relief that the inhabitants of Murchiston Road realised that no further indignity awaited any of the members of their select coterie.

He looked up the street and down, referred to a piece of paper that he held in his hand, scratched his head and shook it, as his eyes fell upon the barricade of soap boxes that covered the exterior of the house at the end of the street.

No doubt the condition of siege, aroused in his mind recollections of temporary fortifications, erected by the Sappers on field days, but they failed to stir the chord of memory connected with his mother, of whom he was in search.

One of the neighbours was ostentatiously watering her flowers, with one eye on the street, and the gunner addressed her politely.

"I am in search of Mrs. Longford; can you help me to find her? My paper tells me that her address is No. 49, but I misdoubt me that it can be that house."

His voice was educated and his manner refined, and the neighbour bounced eagerly out of her front garden, scenting an interesting piece of family history, that might serve to divert the street for some days.

In another moment, the gunner was in possession of every detail of Mrs. Longford's life since she had first arrived at Yawdon, a lonely sorrowful woman, and his face assumed an expression of doubt and horror, that changed the ruddy colour of it to ashen grey.

It was perhaps natural that Mrs. Gard should represent herself as having been the particular friend of the poor distraught soul.

By her generosity had the house been supplied with the necessaries of life, and such kindnesses as Mrs. Longford would accept, and according to Mrs. Gard, they had not been a few.

"My mother—mad," said Longford dully at last. "She, I remember as the prettiest, nippiest little woman, in a smart white frock, with a bit of mistletoe in her hair at Christmas time, and always a joke about it. I suppose that when I 'listed and father drowned himself, she must have got queer by degrees. I wondered all the seven years that I was in India why she never wrote but twice. Perhaps it has been my fault, but I never thought when I took the shilling, that father would put an end to himself, just for a bit of failure in his business."

"Aye, you never know," said the neighbour gloomily. "She's very mad at times and wanders awful in her speech."

Longford grew more ghastly under the tan of his face, and choking for breath, loosened the strap of his forage cap at his chin.

"It—will be all—right—now—I have come back," he said at last. "And maybe the sight of me will bring back her senses a bit."

"I'll take you next door," volunteered Mrs. Gard. "You look quite queer yourself, man. Have a drop of something first."

But Longford shook his head; and she, tightening the strings of her shawl, that had come loose in her excitement, opened the gate, and Longford followed her up the winding path, round to the back door.

It stood on the latch, and they passed through the deserted kitchen, up the wooden stairs that were thick with the dust of many years.

One of the attic doors stood ajar, and Mrs. Gard peered in with a stare of curiosity, then drew back sharply to allow the young man to enter.

Mrs. Longford was on her knees by the bed.

She had taken down the picture of the yellow-haired boy, and was crooning a baby lullaby over it, her body moving to and fro, with the gesture of a mother rocking her child to sleep.

She had stuck a piece of mistletoe in her dishevelled hair, though heaven alone knew where she could have procured such a thing, and the gown that she wore was a torn white muslin, belted round the waist with a baby's sash of blue ribbon.

"Heaven!" groaned the young man under his breath, "my poor mother."

His eyes took in the pathos of the relics that had belonged to him as a child, his toys, his clothes, his books, and he wrung his hands, while Mrs. Gard watched him out of her sharp black eyes.

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"Mother!" he said hoarsely at last, "mother!"

Mrs. Longford turned her head slowly.

Often in her dreams, in the madness of her waking thoughts, had she heard such a word, such a voice. There was no need to answer, for the ghost of the past was with her once again.

"Mother," he said again desperately, with a wild longing that broke through his agony of trouble.

She turned and saw him, and tottered to her feet, holding the picture against her breast.

Framed in the doorway he stood. Time had hollowed his cheeks, his yellow hair was clipped close to his head, his rounded features had taken the imprint of the world that is made up of so much knowledge and suffering.

But she knew him at once, with the wonderful instinct of a mother, for whom there is no deception.

The man saw the light of recognition in her eyes, and sprang forward to catch her in his arms.

She felt the living warmth of those strong arms about her body that had ached for a touch of love for so long.

She saw the love that shone in his sorrowful eyes for her, and stretching out a trembling hand, she touched him softly, her fingers wandering over each feature whose portrait she had so often held against her breast.

"Jem," she said with a harsh scream, that seemed to be the outcome of her many lonely years of pain.

Then, as his lips touched hers, she gave a little sob:

"Oh, Jem," she said again, her tones melting to the perfection of the tenderness he so well remembered.

"Jem—dearie—at last——"

"Mother! oh, mother! What is it? Look here, look here!"

But when Mrs. Gard hurried up with offers of assistance and eager sympathy, she saw that Jem Longford held in his arms a dead woman, and that he was crying over her like a little child.

Joy had been too much for a soul attuned to sorrow, and in the coming of it, her heart had broken.

C. E. C. Weigall.

THE TROTTER.

"Ta! Ta! Trotter, no more play now—mamma must run and dress."

The Trotter listened attentively. Yes, those were the wheels of father's gig coming up the drive. He was puzzled in his small mind; the sound of father's wheels was always the signal to leave off play with mamma. Why?

Trotter's mamma waved a small hand. She was a diminutive person with quantities of fluffy fair hair and deep blue eyes like the Trotter's. The belt round her muslin frock was surely very small even for her; the bloom on her cheeks rather more decided in tint than Nature intended; in fact, where Nature failed (or rather where Dolly Lovegrove fancied Nature failed) there Art stepped in.

Trotter waited with his solemn blue eyes fixed on his mamma's departing figure. She had thrown the baby down so suddenly that he felt half inclined to cry. (It doesn't take much to bring tears at five years old.)

However, he thought better of it, life might be worse; for exit mamma, enter papa, Tommy Trotter's beloved gee-gee, and Bob, that wonderfully interesting Bob, that important person enveloped in buttons. Oh! how those buttons glistened in the sun.

The Trotter was a contented person on the whole, but if there was one individual he was envious of it was Bob—if there was one thing his soul longed for, it was those buttons. He always imagined papa took Bob out because of them (he must be proud of such a noble array).

One day he had asked nurse, who was a good-hearted soul, to sew him beautiful brass buttons, as much like Bob's as possible, all over his pinafore, and then marched boldly down to the hall hours before papa could possibly have arrived and proudly awaited his coming.

But mamma had appeared and spoiled it all. In answer to his "Me's all buttons to go out with papa," she had caught him up in her arms and carried him back to nurse, with instructions to put Master James to bed. "Master James," that was the height of displeasure. He didn't understand in the least. Mamma was always funny, Nurse called her "herratic," this time she said—jealousy.

Well now he ran gleefully up to papa, who petted and made much of him; he was not like mamma, he was old quite old, and oh, so tired looking—but old and tired as he was, when he played it was with all his heart.

However, when he was angry the Trotter knew all coaxing was in vain, and he was obliged to bear his punishment like a man. The inflictor suffered much more than the inflicted though. Now with mamma, Trotter never knew quite where he stood, a smack one

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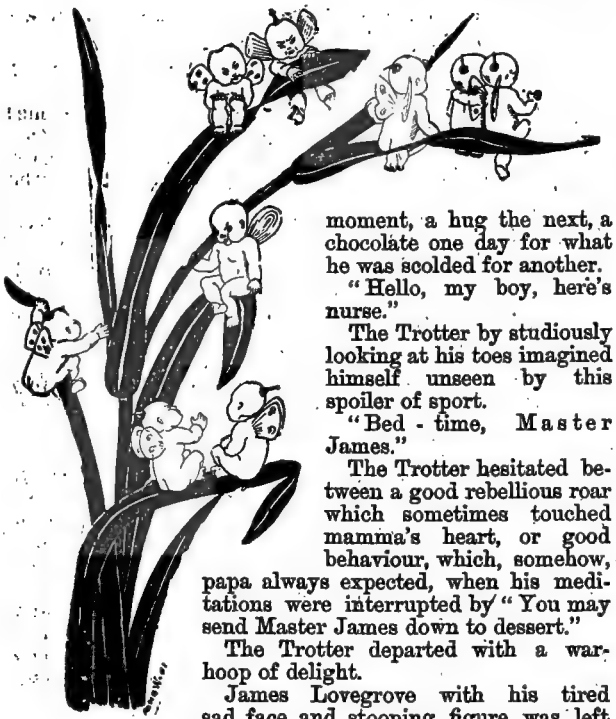

moment, a hug the next, a chocolate one day for what he was scolded for another.

"Hello, my boy, here's nurse."

The Trotter by studiously looking at his toes imagined himself unseen by this spoiler of sport.

"Bed - time, Master James."

The Trotter hesitated between a good rebellious roar which sometimes touched mamma's heart, or good behaviour, which, somehow, papa always expected, when his meditations were interrupted by "You may send Master James down to dessert."

The Trotter departed with a war-hoop of delight.

James Lovegrove with his tired sad face and stooping figure was left alone.

A rustle of silk, an odour of the latest perfume.

"Good evening, Dorothea."

"Good evening, James."

"You dine out to-night?"

"Yes! Truman is late, Ah, here he is," as the brougham drove up. "Elise, my fan."

The smart looking butler who appeared to escort his mistress to the carriage, retreated, the master himself acted as valet on this occasion.

"Good-night, Dorothea. Will you be late to-night?"

"No," with a nervous laugh, "good-night."

"Where shall I direct Truman?"

"He knows, thanks; good-night."

James Lovegrove bowed.

There was a peculiar ring in his voice as he directed the coachman to drive on.

This was the state of affairs at the Dovecote, about the most inappropriate name the charming Putney villa could have, but doubtless the last owners had loved and billed and cooed there, possibly cooed on till Darby and Joan had flown together to another world.

James Lovegrove had felt the inappropriateness of the name but pride kept him from having it altered, for fear of the work people and servants, and neighbours.

Dolly also recognised the mistake, but had flippantly remarked.

"What's in a name?"

James Lovegrove had made a mistake; he, a middle-aged, wealthy merchant had married a pretty actress. He had fallen in love with Dolly Rainsford years ago, and read contrary to other folk's opinion a good heart beat beneath that flippant little manner, and truth and innocence in those deep blue eyes in spite of the pencilled lines underneath.

And somehow this tall, strong, middle-aged man brought out all Dolly Rainsford's best feelings, and so he always saw her fairest side, and when he asked her to marry him, she was glad as a tired child to put herself under his protection.

She gave up the stage without a pang. She was tired, so tired of the struggle for fame and all the petty jealousies and temptations, and for the first year of her married life she was happy, only a little afraid of her sombre-looking husband. He felt a little disappointed in the timidity and childishness of his wife. He liked it at first but later it began to pall.

One day he brought a friend in to dine, a renowned actor who wanted to renew the acquaintance of little Dolly Rainsford. He did so! By degrees he accompanied them out, soon James Lovegrove was too busy to go also, then rather than disappoint his wife he allowed her to go alone with him.

Jack Holmes was an old friend.

By-and-bye the painted lines and rosy tints which had been discarded by Lovegrove's special request reappeared.

Jack Holmes was always saying a great actress was wanted. Those with talent who left the stage were positively wicked.

Lovegrove noticed nothing in these remarks, Dolly who met the accompanying glances saw more—and understood. And so they drifted apart, quite politely but surely.

During the second year James Lovegrove junior made his appearance. Dolly thought Lovegrove wanting in fatherly feelings towards his adorable son and heir. She adored him as a child a new toy, but would never have dreamed of giving up a pleasure on the Trotter's behalf.

Lovegrove noticed this, and was more jealous for his son than he had ever been on his own account.

He petted and spoiled the boy behind his mother's back, but somehow in her presence he was shy.

* * * * *

The Trotter came down to dessert, he seemed flushed and tired, he didn't talk much but as he expressed it, "was dreffel thirsty and felt all burning."

Lovegrove felt uneasy and sent for nurse, who took the Trotter to bed, for a wonder without demur. He was left alone in a brown study.

* * * * *

At a small table at the Pitsani Restaurant, Dolly Lovegrove and Jack Holmes were supping.

She was flushed and excited. He also seemed less calm than usual.

"My dear girl," he was saying. "Thirty pounds a week, you might make a name. Absurd to be cooped up with a dull old fogey and a baby. I'm leading man, and——"

Various scraps of conversation came from the surrounding tables. A contented clatter of knives and forks, the popping of corks, and the noise of the waiters as they rushed to and fro.

Over there the fair woman in blue was giggling loudly, and the lovesick youth by her side looked volumes.

An elderly couple at the next table showed disapproval. At that table in the corner a little *débutante* was talking excitedly with her parents of her first opera.

The next table was a party of three: a pretty woman,

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a handsome man, and the third evidently her husband looked decidedly out of it and anything but pleased.

Above all a delicious waltz was playing.

* * * * *

A knock at the dining-room door.

"Come in! You, Nurse! What is it?"

"Please, sir, Master James, he isn't at all well, sir. He's that feverish and a bit delirious too. We ought to send for the doctor."

"Send! No! I'll go myself at once. I'll just have a look at him first."

Up strode Lovegrove.

There in his tiny cot the Trotter with wide open eyes was wailing.

"I wants mamma, my own booful mamma," he cried, over and over again.

Lovegrove with a furious feeling tugging at his heart, rushed down, was out and at Doctor Dent's in a moment.

Doctor Dent came and muttered about young children who were weaklings and high fevers.

"Where's his mother?" he asked sharply, "she ought to be here. He must be given in to. This crying only raises the temperature."

The doctor left. Midnight found the Trotter quieter; he realised it was papa who was sitting by him and smoothing his hot little head and soon fell into a doze, then suddenly roused again.

It was a noise in the street had awakened him. The doctor had said he was particularly to be kept quiet, on no account to be disturbed if he slept.

Yes! It was the carriage wheels, that loud laughter and those voices that aroused him.

"Good-bye!"

"Not good-bye, *au revoir!*"

To Lovegrove the laughter sounded fiendish. He beckoned to nurse, and in spite of the Trotter's cries went down. He ran into Dolly in the middle of the stairs.

"The child is ill," he said hoarsely.

"What, ill? The Trotter ill?"

All the joyous flippancy left her voice, all the sparkling light of her eyes vanished.

"Ill!"

She brushed past him and made straight for the nursery, straight for the little cot.

The Trotter gazed at her but he did not know the lady in white satin and was frightened. His cries for mamma were forgotten now; it was papa, papa only, that he wanted. She tried to lift him out of his cot.

"Do away, naughty lady," he lisped, "I wants papa."

Lovegrove waved her away and resumed his post by the bed. A wild look came into Dolly's eyes.

"He doesn't want me! The child doesn't want me! Nobody wants me. Jack, Jack! I am coming to you."

She rushed to the door. The rustle of her dress roused the Trotter. The moonlight streaming on the white satin and diamonds cast an eerie light.

"Papa! An angel! Look! Look! It's doing. Tall it back."

There was no need. The angel heard and turned. He held out his little arms and said "Tum!"

Something in her movements recalled him. He jumped up.

"It's mamma, my own booful mamma!" he cried.

She clasped him in her arms, and the Trotter, happy now, laid his little head on her shoulder and slept peacefully. It was the mother's turn now.

"Leave us," she murmured.

James Lovegrove, as he paced up and down the library, kept the vision in his mind of his wife, flippant, childish Dolly, pacing up and down the nursery, regardless of satin and diamonds, the Trotter in her arms, enveloped in her opera-cloak. The woman who thought so much of feathers and furbelows, had snatched up this masterpiece of Doucet's, ostrich feathers, chiffon and all, and had wrapped it round her child. Even the old nurse, who was no friend of her mistress, who never made allowances for youth, beauty, or anything else, demurred.

"Leave us!"

Some of the old stage movements came back to her. There was a world in that wave of her hand.

Nurse retired.

Ah! She was the queen of the nursery now. Rather queen of that one small subject, than monarch of all the audiences of all the theatres in the world.

* * * * *

The sun, peeping in at the window, crowned her queen of home.

The doctor came next morning. Possibly, it was owing to the child's being better, or it may have been something in Mrs. Lovegrove's face; anyway, a few homely facts he had meant to say, remained unspoken.

The fever had run its course; and to Dolly, the fever for fame, glory, admiration, had died out.

The Trotter lived! Whatever he accomplished in after life, it was at the beginning and unconsciously that his best work was done.

'Tis no mean thing to reunite two souls!

QUEENIE SICHEL.

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Mabel's Stratagem.

It was almost like a bit of Persian poetry, that little conservatory, in its glow and fragrance and soft, delicious murmur of leaves. And Mabel Moore herself looked not unlike a Persian enchantress, as she stood resting one hand on a marble vase.

She was not alone in the flowery fragrance of the conservatory. Ernest Beckford was leaning against one of the stages, twisting and untwisting a spray of jessamine with a sort of impatient rapidity.

"Mabel," he said, "you know that you are asking impossibilities."

"Am I?"

"I cannot go to South America without you."

"You can, Ernest, and you will."

"But, my darling, only think of it—a year's exile from you!"

"Will it be any easier for me to endure?" she asked calmly.

"Sometimes I fancy, Mabel," he resumed impetuously, "that you don't care for me."

"Ernest!"

"My dearest, I know I am unjust, but——"

"Now let us understand just what you wish me to do in this matter."

"I want you to marry me this afternoon and go out to South America with me in the ship that sails to-morrow."

"A very reasonable wish," said Mabel, laughing. "But you know I will never marry you while your mother refuses her sanction."

"She does not know you."

"That makes no difference. I shall never enter a family where I am not welcomed!"

"But just consider how unreasonable you are."

"She fancies me a hollow, heartless woman of the world, does she not? She is unwilling to trust her son's happiness in the keeping of a coquette."

"I am sorry I ever allowed you to read that unreasonable letter."

"But I am glad. No, I have too much pride and dignity to marry you unless your mother gives her free and full consent."

"Then you do not love me, Mabel?"

"I do love you, Ernest, better than I like to acknowledge to myself."

"Mabel," he urged tenderly, "let us cut this Gordian knot by the exercise of our own free will. Become my wife."

Mabel Moore shook her head.

"Let us wait and see what time may bring forth," she said archly. "And now leave me; remember that the ship sails at noon to-morrow."

"I can't possibly go in this vessel."

"But if you do not go to-morrow you will be obliged to wait another week, and your uncle may be dead by the time you arrive."

"Yes, I know, but——"

"Well?"

"I must get that companion for my mother—she will be entirely alone. Mrs. Carter told me she knew someone who would take the situation, and I shall have to go over to see her about it to-morrow."

"Don't let that detain you. I think I know of a young woman who would make an excellent companion, and I will send her to Hampstead."

"Can she read aloud?"

"Oh, she can do everything."

"Send her on, then. But, Mabel——"

"Well?"

"It strikes me you are anxious to hurry me off."

"Ernest," she said in a voice that quivered a little, "you are misjudging me. I want you to do your duty. The sunshine will come at last, if you can only wait unrepiningly."

"Little prophetess," he said, drawing her fondly towards him, "I accept your auguries. No one ought to be discouraged who is sure of your love."

* * * * *

"Going away, Miss Mabel?"

The little maid stood aghast in her occupation of putting away laces in a satin-lined box of sandalwood.

"Yes. Get my trunks ready, Mildred; I prefer to pack them myself."

"And when do we start, miss?"

"I shall not take you with me."

"But Miss Mabel——"

"I choose to go alone. There—now leave me to myself."

* * * * *

Mrs. Beckford, of Hampstead, was sitting alone in her parlour—musing on her far off son, with a total abstraction from all outward sights and sounds—and when all of a sudden she looked up, a pretty young person clad in brown cloth gown stood before her.

"What is it you want?" said Mrs. Beckford curtly.

"If you please, madam, I am come to offer myself as your companion."

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"Who sent you?" demanded the lady.

"I heard that Mrs. Beckford was wanting a companion, and I should like to take the situation."

"Hum-m-m," said the old lady. "What's your name?"

"Edith Moore."

"Moore—Moore? Got any relations at Sydenham?"

"No, madam. I am alone in the world."

"I'm glad of that. I couldn't stand anyone who is connected with the guitar-playing girl who—but never mind that just now. Where are your references?"

Edith Moore drew a letter or two from her pocket.

"So Mrs. Carter knows you, eh?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Well," commented the matron, glancing over the notes, "these recommendations seem very satisfactory. I—don't know—but that you may come and try. The only objection I can see is that you're too pretty, but I don't think you are really to blame for that. Take off your things."

* * * * * *

More than a year has crept over the daily current of life at Hampstead. The trees were bare and leafless, and the snow lay white and deep by the roadside.

"How soon it grows dark!" said Mrs. Beckford, with a little sigh. "That's right, Edith, put on some more wood and draw the curtains. Now we're snug!"

Snug, indeed, they were, with the shaded lamp glowing softly on the table and the bright wood fire sending up its fluttering spires of red light on the hearth.

Edith was sitting on a low stool beside her. She looked wonderfully pretty.

"What's that you were saying a little while ago about going back to Sydenham, my dear?" said the old lady, suddenly turning round to Edith. "I want you to understand that you can't go. I can't spare you."

She put one arm round Edith's neck, and drew the round cheek down on her lap.

"Do you really love me, Mrs. Beckford?" asked the girl, earnestly.

"Love you, darling. I could no more get along without you than I could without the sunshine. It seems as though you belong to me. I don't know what you've done to steal my old heart away, I'm sure, but you remind me somehow of the little daughter I once lost. You won't leave me, dear?"

There was something almost pathetic in her pleading voice.

"Dear Mrs. Beckford," whispered Edith, with the nappy crimson dyeing her cheek, "I'll never leave you; I will stay with you always. Oh, I am so glad you have learned to love me—more glad than I can tell you. But——"

"Well, dear?"

"There's something I want to tell you—something I nave kept back from you," faltered Edith. "Mrs. Beckford, I am——"

But Mrs. Beckford had started to her feet.

"Hush! did I not hear his footstep? It was my boy's foot upon the threshold! He has come back to me!"

She rushed to the door and threw it wide open, and the tall, stalwart figure caught her in his arms as if she had been a little child.

"Mother, are you glad to see your wanderer?"

As she drew him in, he caught a momentary glimpse of the figure in the apartment beyond.

"You are not alone, mother?"

"No, Edith is with me."

"And who may Edith be?"

"Didn't you get my letters? I wrote all about her."

"I haven't seen a letter for three months."

Edith was standing where the full brilliance of the lamp shone upon her, as mother and son entered the room together. Ernest stopped short, gazing at her in bewilderment.

"Mabel!"

"Ernest, what do you mean?" exclaimed Mrs. Beckford. "This is Edith Moore."

"She is Mabel Moore, my own sweetheart!" said Ernest, springing forward and sealing his words on lip and brow and cheek, while the young lady, much to Mrs. Beckford's horror, made not the slightest resistance. The next moment, however, she withdrew from his encircling arms, and glided to the astonished matron's side.

"Mrs. Beckford," she said softly, "I may tell you now what was just trembling on my lips when Ernest's footsteps interrupted me. My name is Edith, but it is Mabel too. Will you forgive me for stealing into your heart by stratagem? Half an hour ago I promised never to leave you. You will not send me away from you now?"

And Mrs. Beckford melted straightway before the pleading of the blue eyes.

"I always wanted a daughter," she said, "but I couldn't bear the idea of Mabel Moore, the heiress."

"But you will love little Edith, who came to be your companion?"

"I suppose I ought to scold you for deceiving me," said the old lady, "but I—I couldn't help loving you if I were to try ever so hard, and I don't want to try, and that's just the truth of the matter. There, I must see about some tea for you."

As though Ernest cared for anything less ethereal than Mabel just then? F. M. C.

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A Mission in Petticoats.

YES, it amuses you vastly, you young rogues, to learn that the picture of a girl, which hangs in your grandfather's bedroom is simply a portrait of your old grandad. You thought it was a likeness of your dear grandmother before she married me, eh? Well, now you know better.

Want to hear how it all came about? No; of course men didn't wear skirts and petticoats, like women, in those days! Anyone would think I was an ancient Briton.

It's only about fifty years ago; but I suppose that is a terribly long time for you to think of. I'll tell you the tale, since you wish to hear it.

It was at the time when the man who afterwards became Napeleon III. was pursuing his intrigues in order to win the throne of France. I was a young fellow of twenty-one and very badly off; my prospects were anything but brilliant, I had all the Briton's love of adventure, and I had arrived at that condition of mind when a youth is ready to do any mortal thing for the purpose of making a little headway in the world. I wanted to turn a little of the darkness into light, and I was not particular what I did to accomplish this end, so long as the method was not to my discredit.

I was one night walking moodily along the side of the Thames when I passed two men in earnest conversation. As they went by I caught the words "Whom can we get to undertake it?" and, without thinking of what I was doing, I wheeled round, walked right up to them, and said, "I'll do it."

I have often laughed since at the scare I gave them. They turned upon me with fierce exclamations in French, and one whipped out a pistol and pointed it at my head. They said something to me in the same language, but I shook my head.

"Talk in English, as you did just now," I suggested; "then I shall understand."

They looked at each other. Then they smiled.

"It is true," assented one of them. "We have lived many years here, and we fall insensibly into the language." He said a few words in his own tongue to his companion, after which he again addressed me. "Are you in need of work?"

"I am in need of money," I responded bluntly, "and I suppose I must work to get it."

"Come with us," he said, just as abruptly. And we all three made our way to an inn that was situated in one of the streets that led into the Strand

We took our seats in a small room off the bar, and I noticed the second man eyeing me rather unfavourably. Scarcely were we comfortably seated in our chairs, when he spoke contemptuously.

"He will not do for us—he is no stronger than a girl."

Of course, I was quite aware that this remark was directed against me. I ought to explain that, in appearance, I really was rather girlish. I was not more than medium height, I hadn't a vistage of a moustache, and I was slim of figure as well as effeminate of countenance. I had often been twitted about it, but the jesters had discovered that I was strong of muscle. I stood up defiantly now.

"My appearance may be that of a girl," I retorted, "but my strength is that of a man, as I have proved and will prove. Look here," I added, baring my arm, "what of that?"

I fancy that he was somewhat of a judge of muscle and sinew, for after a searching glance he apologised gracefully.

Then we came quickly to the matter in hand. They first questioned me closely regarding myself, and then told me what they wanted me to do. I was to convey a small packet to Rouen and deliver it to a Monsieur Bardeau who resided in the Grande Rue, which, they explained was the equivalent of "High Street."

"Is that all?" I asked in some surprise.

"You will find the task sufficiently hard to accomplish," was the answer of Monsieur Lebrun, as the chief speaker called himself. "The very fact that we are sending it by an Englishman and by hand rather than by the mail is enough to demonstrate that the mission is difficult."

"What is the price and what have I to fear?" was my next remark.

"I will give you enough money to pay your expenses and twenty pounds in addition. Monsieur Bardeau will give you eighty pounds more if—er, when you hand the packet to him. As to the other question, you run the risk of being robbed of the packet by our enemies, but exactly how or by whom I am, naturally, quite unable to say. That is your affair. But, if the worst comes, destroy it."

I began to think that the reward was not proportionate, and tried to get an increase; but they refused, and I did not like to lose the chance. So we commenced to discuss plans for the journey.

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Three days later, if you had been alive, you might have seen a young English girl, attended by an elderly Frenchwoman, land at Boulogne. The young lady was on her way to Paris, to join her relatives, but she intended to visit various places on her way. That damsel was your grandfather, just as you see him in that picture.

It had occurred to me that such a disguise was the best calculated to effect the object in view; my companion was not disguised—she was genuine. The plan had been successful so far, and I considered myself indebted to my girlish appearance.

Of course as an English girl I was obliged to have a companion, but I was distrustful of this lady; not because I thought she would play us false—my employers had great confidence in her, but because she might betray our game in her fright if we got into a fix.

We stayed that night at the best inn, and set out the next morning in a hired conveyance that was to take us a few miles across country towards our destination. I was an "eccentric" daughter of perfidious Albion, desirous of running about the country; but as all our people are eccentric in the eyes of our neighbours, there was nothing uncommon in my vagaries.

"This is easy work and I shall earn that money without trouble," said I to my companion, Madame Juvette.

"I hope so," she returned nervously, "but I would not say one word about the affair anywhere, even in English. It is not money that I ask; I am a devoted friend of the cause; but I dare not hope that we shall be fortunate enough to outwit them."

"Nonsense!" I exclaimed in a light-hearted manner. "The roundabout way we have come and our assumed characters have thrown them off the scent entirely."

I contrasted my present idea with my former notion, when I had asked that the reward might be increased, and I laughed gleefully. That was where I made a mistake, for I was not out of the wood.

I had a mind to enjoy the trip as much as I could, so when we had gone some little distance and had arrived in the midst of some scenery that pleased me, I had the conveyance stopped and told Madame Juvette that I intended to stroll about for a while. We alighted, she somewhat unwillingly, telling the coachman to await our return, and off we went.

I do not quite know how long we had been walking when we reached a narrow lane that wound in and out. I liked the peaceful look of this turning, and we walked along it for a few yards. In doing so, as it proved, I had played into the hands of the enemy.

I was reaching up to pick a flower, when an exclamation from my travelling companion caused me to turn. I found myself confronted by a man of middle height, about forty years of age, and clearly a native of modern Gaul. He smiled sarcastically as he addressed me in English.

"Mademoiselle, like all the misses of the other side, is very daring, and her daring has made her imprudent."

I could see at once that he meant that I had been too venturesome in walking down that lane while on my mission—for I had no doubt that he had tracked me. But one thing that was not so evident was—did he really take me for a young woman or was that a part of the sarcasm?

"I do not understand what Monsieur means," I answered, assuming an air of surprise. "I thought that a girl—and a foreigner—would be sure of safety here in France, where the men are so chivalrous." I tried to catch a glimpse of Madame Juvette, out of the corner of my eye, but I could not see that lady.

"Mademoiselle will be safe enough here," said the man, his smile broadening in a way that made me cross, "if she does not interfere with politics. It will be better for her to give up that document she has upon her."

There was no longer any utility in pretending innocence; the crisis had come, and if I wished to preserve the packet I must fight for it. I had a pistol and a dagger about me, but so certain had I been that I should not be molested that I had not got them ready to my hand. I made a movement to get at one or the other, but my antagonist observed my intention and, stepping quickly forward, he grasped my right wrist.

"No resistance, mademoiselle," he continued sternly. "I do not wish to hurt you, but I must have those papers."

My heart gave a little leap; he had ceased to be sarcastic and he still addressed me as "Mademoiselle." That was my chance.

"Oh, will no one help me?" I cried, making a pretendedly great effort to release myself. "Why should I be taken for a conspirator?"

I knew that my feeble attempt to drag myself from his clutch would have a double effect—it would give him the impression that I was a weak girl and it would bring him just a little closer to me. I was ready for him.

With the object, I take it, of stopping further resistance, he pulled me towards him and tried to grip my other wrist; but instead of a weakly maiden he had to

Without thinking of what I was doing, I wheeled round, walked right up to them, and said: "I'll do it."

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deal with a man who was not only strong, but had learned to wrestle and to box. In an instant I had him; there was a very brief struggle, and then he went flying over the head of "Mademoiselle" and landed with a groan in the ditch.

I should have liked to continue the affray, but I judged it more prudent to be off. I was picking up my skirts to run, but I heard Madame Juvette calling me.

"Come this way," she cried. "Heavens, but how did you manage that?"

"Easily enough!" I returned. "But we are not going back to the carriage. That rascal of a driver is one of the gang, I'm sure. No matter; he must now get his pay from the other parties!"

I knew by the position of the sun the direction in which we should journey in order to reach Rouen, and I resolved to walk some of the distance in as straight a line as I could. We went through fields and rough lanes, cutting off corners by scrambling through hedges, much to Madame Juvette's disgust, for she was not young and active as I was. Still, the thought of the "cause" supported her, and we covered many miles before nightfall.

I felt that we must get to Rouen without avoidable delay now. I did not know how many there might be in that gang, and I could hardly rely upon my disguise any more. So I wanted to put a goodly space between my packet and the man I had left in the ditch, before he could recover, tell his friends, and get on my track again. So we avoided the villages on our way, until night and fatigue compelled us to think of some sort of shelter.

"There seems to be a small village just in front of us," I said. "We will seek rest and food at the inn or of some farmer. We can say that we have been ill-treated by robbers on the road, and forced to give up our conveyance and walk. That will account for our torn clothing. I think it impossible that our mission can be known there."

Madame agreed; she was so done up that she would have acquiesced in any plan, I verily believe. Our clothing was torn by our passage through hedges, to say nothing of a big rent in my bodice—a souvenir of the wrestling bout.

When we reached the village I tried a cottage, but was viewed with such mistrust that I walked off in high dudgeon to the inn.

There we were hospitably received, food was promptly placed before us, and the necessary sewing materials handed to Madame Juvette in order that she might repair our clothing.

"I doubt whether it will be safe to enter Rouen in your present disguise," observed Madame, when we were alone in the small parlour. "It might prejudice Bardeau, and we must not betray anything of our plans before the time is propitious for the *coup*."

"Then the only way is to push on to the outskirts of the city, and for you to enter Rouen and bring Bardeau out to me," I remarked. "Unless," I added, thoughtfully, "I can get some masculine clothing and pass as a deaf and dumb peasant or something of that sort."

"I might enter the next village or town alone and buy some male attire," said Juvette, "but to do that here would be to arouse suspicion. We can try, but I think it will be best for you not to be seen near the house of Bardeau."

It was at the time of the year when night falls early, and by nine o'clock we had spent a fairly long evening. Madame Juvette was ready for her couch, but I was refreshed by the rest, and in no mood to retire for a while. So she went at the landlady's invitation, and I decided to sit up yet another hour. As I think of it now, it must have appeared indecorous that a girl should sit alone by the fire, but the landlady evinced no surprise. On the contrary, it struck me that she was pleased, and I thought it was because the other bedroom was not quite ready.

About twenty minutes later, there was a rap at the door, and a young woman, about my own age, entered and spoke to me in my own language.

"May I sit with you and talk to you a little?" she asked. "I am of the same nationality as yourself. My mother married a second time—she married the proprietor of this inn. She died two years ago. The landlady is my stepfather's sister."

"Oh!" I said. "That accounts for your being able to speak English. Do you like living here?"

She hesitated a moment. "No," she replied in a low tone. "I do not."

The conversation flagged. Seeing that she had come in to have a chat, I thought this very strange. I observed her eyeing me very narrowly, and I began to feel puzzled. Several minutes passed, and we had exchanged but a dozen sentences or so, when she rose to go. I was vexed with myself for being so dull; I am not usually lacking in conversational powers, but something in her manner stopped the flow of words

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"I must go now," she whispered, coming closer to me, "but first I wish to give you a word of advice. Be very careful, *Monsieur*."

And before I had recovered from my surprise she was gone. She had divined my sex, but how? Had she found out my secret unaided, or had she been told? At any rate, her warning was worthy of my attention. I would be careful! I looked to my pistol and dagger to see that they were in good condition, and to place them handy for use.

The landlady came in again, and questioned me by a look as to whether I was prepared for bed. I nodded assent and followed her out of the room. She carried a flickering candle, but it gave so little light that it was impossible to see where I was going.

We went along a passage, leading to the back of the house, where I supposed the stairs to be situated. She stopped at a door—I could tell that by the sensation of being near something, and by hearing her raise the latch. It opened; I felt a breath of air, and then I was pushed violently forward through the doorway and into a yard, or similar space, paved with great cobbles.

I was just able to prevent myself from falling headlong, but I went down upon my knees. I heard the door slam behind me, and an exclamation in front. I leapt to my feet, and stepped backwards cautiously till I felt my back touch the wall; then out came my pistol.

But, alas! I had hardly drawn it forth ere I heard a kind of swishing or soughing to one side; I made a rapid move, which, undoubtedly, saved me from a severe blow, but the cudgel struck the firearm and knocked it out of my hand. It fell somewhere near me, but I could not locate it.

It appeared that I had two adversaries, armed with staves, perhaps with swords as well. They had no firearms apparently—firearms make a noise, I remembered. I had my dagger only; the fight was therefore unequal.

It was my best plan to keep my back to the wall, while dodging their blows and trying to get one in for myself. There was but little light, but, fortunately, my sight was keen, and I hoped to be able to follow their movements.

I am not likely to forget that fight in the dark. I had to keep both my eyes and my ears strained to their fullest capabilities, in order to defend myself against the two men who were bent upon reducing me to helplessness, at least, and taking the precious packet from me.

I found my feminine attire very much in the way; in my contests at school, and during my lessons in fencing, wrestling, and boxing, I had, of course, been accustomed to more freedom, and the new style of dress was decidedly irksome; still, I had no choice, and was forced to make the best of the matter.

I had my work cut out for me. I sparred about with my left hand, endeavouring to land a blow with my fist. I had to skip about to avoid their blows, and I made one or two feints and rushes in my efforts to make use of my dagger. I did not wish to kill either of them, but I meant to do my utmost to disable them. And I believe that they were actuated by the same motive towards myself.

I cannot tell how long we were at it, but I suppose it was only a few minutes. I had received three slight blows—slight because I had partially succeeded in dodging them, but at last one of the sticks came down on my left arm with sufficient force to render it useless for a time. I ground my teeth in rage; I was now no match for them, tired as I had become, and with only one arm.

I had to keep my eyes and my ears strained to their fullest capabilities, in order to defend myself against the two men who were bent upon reducing me to helplessness, and taking the precious packet from me.

My antagonists chuckled.

"Give it up to us," demanded one of them in bad English. "We don't want to kill you, but——"

"You'll have to kill me before you get it!" I cried desperately.

They made a step towards me, but just then something seemed to irritate my eyes and nose. I sniffed involuntarily, and the next instant I sneezed loudly. My eyes smarted and my nose tickled so that I could do nothing but sneeze. Then I heard the others swearing—that's what I took it to be, from the sound—and sneezing also. All three

of us were practically helpless under some evil influence.

I was leaning against what I thought was the wall, sneezing violently, the tears streaming from my eyes, when my support yielded gently, and before I was aware of it I was in the corridor once more, and the door shut behind me. I then saw that my saviour was the young English girl, who said hurriedly:

"I told you to be careful. Now you must be off—quick. They forgot that my room-window overlooked that yard. I hope the pepper has not hurt you much, but it was the only thing I could think of to stop the fight and help you. I tried to throw it mostly over them."

"Heaven bless you!" I cried. "And Madame Juvette?"

"She is away, on the road; you will find her. But get away at once."

By this time we had reached a side door, and she pushed me out. I had no time even to ask her name, for she shut the door softly in my face.

I caught up with Juvette, and the next day she purchased a suit for me. But it was useless to expect that we should not be overtaken if we travelled together; she was known as well as I. So we decided to part; she to remain in the town, where she made friends with a woman, and I, after having studied the route, pushed on by the quietest roads to my destination. We were to meet again, if possible, on my return journey.

I soon found that I was followed, but I eluded my pursuers by hiding in a ditch. I take it that they did not know my exact destination, for I heard no more of them.

I entered Rouen after dark on the following day, and went to Bardeau's house, which I had no trouble in finding, from the minute directions given to me by Juvette.

Monsieur Bardeau greeted me cordially, and made me comfortable while he read the contents of the packet. When he had finished he smiled.

"You have rendered us a great service," he said. At least, that is what he meant, for we had to talk as best we could with a mixture of the two languages and a plentiful use of signs. "Do you know what is in this?"

I shook my head.

"Nothing," was the astonishing reply. "That is, this page of writing is useless in itself, and is not the important document that you thought you were carrying. To me, who can read between the lines, it means that you have acted as a false scent. You were despatched with this document, a hint was allowed to be gleaned by the other side that a messenger, probably disguised as a girl, was taking important papers across the Channel—and the thing was done. They were on the watch for you, and while they were so occupied, another message was sent over to the proper party. That messenger has no doubt had an easy task, thanks to you. Of course, the better you defended your charge, the more they were thrown off the right scent. You have been very useful, and it gives me much pleasure to hand to you the eighty pounds promised to you."

I was nicely enraged when I managed to grasp the meaning of this. It was not pleasant to be tricked. After a while I cooled down a little, and I recognised that in my fashion I had rendered a service, and that I had at least fulfilled my mission. And I discovered that Juvette knew all about the plot.

"I told you to be careful. Now, you must be off—quick."

I took leave of Bardeau on the evening of the next day, he having cared for me and kept me in hiding for nearly twenty-four hours. I was this time disguised as an Italian workman, in clothes lent to me by Bardeau. It was understood that I should rejoin Juvette, but I was still sore at the deception practised on me, and I struck out for the coast in an entirely different direction. I never saw Madame Juvette again.

I had some difficulty in getting back to Old England, but I was not pursued, so far as I know. Anyhow, I got back safely.

I had about ninety pounds when I reached London, and this set me up in business — my adventure having satisfied me for the time.

It was nearly three years later when I ventured into France again, and I went straight to the inn where the fight in the dark had taken place. The object I had in view was immediately attained, for the first person I set eyes on was the young woman who had saved me.

After we were married—in London—we had that portrait painted. Both your grandmother and I were able to describe the dress for the guidance of the artist.

G. Day.

The best Pictorial History of the War is to be found from week to week in

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ILLUSTRATED WAR NEWS.

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SHORT STORIES ABOUT PEOPLE.

We devote, every week, two pages of *Short Stories* to pithy, humourous anecdotes similar to those which appear in these columns. A prize of £1 1s. will be sent to the reader who submits the best storyette this week, and a copy of George Griffith's "Valdar the Oft-Born" to each of those whose attempts are used. The anecdotes may be either original or selected; in the latter case the source must be stated. The prize of One Guinea offered for the best Storyette in this competition has been won this week by Mr. Jos. Edwards, 5 Berwick Street, Burnley. Attempts for this week's prize should deal with WAR ANECDOTES and must reach the Storyette Editor, *Short Stories* Office, Henrietta Street, Strand, London, W.C., by Monday, February 5th. Post-cards only, please.

Worse than Killed.

A PRIVATE soldier in one of the Irish regiments engaged in South Africa in a dreadful battle cried out during the hottest part of the action:

"Och, murther! I'm kilt entirely."

"Are you wounded?" inquired an officer near him.

"Wounded is it? yer honour," replied Pat, "by the powers, I'm worse than kilt out and out. Wasn't I waiting for the last quarter of an hour for a pull at Tim Murphy's pipe, and there now, it's shot out of his mouth!"

The Men That Wanted it.

A REGIMENT of soldiers was drawn up for church parade in the barrack-square at Belfast, but the church was being repaired and could only hold half of them.

"Sergeant-major," shouted the colonel, "tell all the men who don't want to go to church to fall out on the reverse flank."

Of course, a large number quickly and gladly availed themselves of the privilege.

"Now, sergeant-major," said the colonel, "dismiss all the men who did not fall out, and march the others to church—they want it most."

What He Didn't Expect.

A BURNLEY man, who is a Reservist, got his papers for the front one day last week.

On going away he wanted his wife to accompany him to the station.

"Nay," said she, "aw shan't go to station wi' thi; but aw'll bid thee good-bye, and I hope tha'll give th' Boers as good a slugging as tha's given me, and aw'll bet they'll remember it!"

So Tommy walked away with a tear in his eye.

He Wanted to Join In.

A STRANGER once went into a London court and spent some time watching the proceedings. By-and-bye a man was brought up for contempt of court and fined, whereupon the stranger rose and said: "How much was the fine?"

"One pound," replied the clerk.

"Well," said the stranger, laying down the money, "if that's all I'd like to join in. I've had a few hours' experience of this court, and no one can feel a greater contempt for it than I do, and I am willing to pay for it."

Absorbed.

THE young man who writes verses was standing out in the night gazing at the sky when a friend ran across him.

"What are you doing? Studying astronomy?"

"Go away and don't disturb me. I am gazing into infinite distance."

"I don't see what satisfaction you find in that."

"That's because you never had any experience with editors. You don't know what a comfort it is to find some place where nothing is crowded out for lack of space."

Bow-Legged Stockings.

DURING last autumn a pitman was asked by a friend, who was very bow-legged, to purchase, when next "i' the toon," a pair of stockings for him. On the following pay Saturday the pitman entered the shop of a well-known hosier to make the purchase.

The shopman was most obligi g; but having shown the intending purchaser nearly every pair in stock, he at last thought it time to ask of the man a more minute description of what was required.

He said he had shown nearly all they had, and he was sure their shop was second to none, and as they had hitherto given satisfaction to all classes, it was strange that they could not now suit a customer. The pitman laconically replied: "What I want is a pair o' bow-legged yins."

Taking his Time for it.

THERE is a business man who is a member of a well-known firm, and who has an impediment in his speech.

He is not at all sensitive about it, however, and not only takes a joke at his own expense in good part, but often takes liberties with his friends based upon his own affliction. The other day he went to the telephone, and a conversation something like this ensued:

"H-h-hello! Is th-th-that Mr. J-J-Jones?"

"Yes; this is Mr. Jones. Who is that?"

"Why, I'm M-M-Mr. S-S-Smith."

"Ah, Mr. Smith, how are you? What can I do for you?"

"W-w-why have y-y-you h-half an hour to s-spare?"

"Yes; I think I have."

"T-t-that's all r-r-right, then. I j-j-just want to h-h-have about t-t-two minutes' c-c-conver-sa-sation w-w-with you."

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Quite Another Sort of Man.

A distinguished divine of unusually solemn and impressive appearance went to a country town to lecture. He arrived early in the afternoon, and all the town, of course, spotted him within five minutes as a very great and saintly man. He went into a chemist's shop, and in tones that froze the young blood of the shopman said:

"Young—man—do—you—smoke?"

"Y-yes, sir," said the trembling clerk. "I'm sorry, but I learned the habit young, and haven't been able to leave it off."

"Then," said the great divine, without the movement of a muscle or the abatement of a shade of the awful solemnity of his voice, "can you tell me where I can get a good cigar?"

A Bit of His Own Back.

A farmer had just given his son a sound thrashing because he had accidentally killed one of his favourite fowls, and left him in the house sobbing while he went to look after his pigs. Presently the minister came up to the door, and asked:

"Is your father in?"

"No," replied the boy sulkily.

"Where has he gone?"

"He's in the pig-pen feedin' the pigs."

"Thank you, my little man; I'll go and see him."

The minister had not got many yards away when the boy called out:

"Oi say, minister, you'll know which is 'e; 'e's got a cap on!"

His New Hat.

A well-known clergymen of somewhat arbitrary manners was engaged to preach in a fashionable district, and purchased a new hat for the occasion. His guide, after what the parson thought a rude stare and smile, said:

"I beg your pardon, sir, your hat——"

"Oh, yes, never mind the hat, but your own business," said the clergyman curtly, and the young man was silenced.

The people they met stared and smiled, too.

"Strange how many notice when one has got a new hat," thought the parson.

The vicar met him at the church door, and, hesitating, said:

"Pardon me, but why do you wear your hat so?"

The tile was doffed, and found to be still covered with the white paper, which the unconscious parson had forgotten to remove.

He Thought Aloud.

In the North of England there was a man who engaged a lawyer to conduct a case in court. As the lawyer was not talking exactly to suit him, he got up to make a few remarks himself. The magistrate, of course, made him resume his seat. He got up again, and the magistrate made him resume his seat again. A third and fourth time this happened, and finally the old farmer got up and said:

"Well, sir, if you won't let me talk, won't you let me think?"

"Yes, certainly," replied the magistrate.

"Well, sir," he said, "I think you and all these lawyers are a set of sneakin' rascals."

Gallery Wit.

A funny story of the East-end stage refers to a popular actor named Harry Simmonds. He was supposed in a melodrama of the day to have run through a fortune, and to contemplate suicide. Someone knocked at the door of his wretched garret. He hastily thrust his revolver into the drawer of the table at which he sat. An old solicitor entered.

"It is my pleasing duty," said he, "to tell you that your Uncle John is dead, and" (impressively) "has left you half a million of money."

"Half a million of money!" said the suicide, thus suddenly restrained; "what shall I do with it—what *shall* I do with it?"

"Well, 'Arry," said a gallery boy, "I should buy a pair of boots—first!"

Open or Shut?

First Guest: "Hi! Waiter, open that window, please. I can't stand this heat."

Waiter: "Yes, d'rectly, sir!" (Opens the window.)

Second Guest (a little later): "Waiter, there's draught enough to give one a death of cold. Do shut the window."

Waiter: "Yes, sir." (Shuts the window.)

First Guest: "Waiter, are you mad? What have you closed the window for? Open it again this minute."

Waiter: "Very good, sir." (Goes to the landlord.) "One of the gentlemen wants the window open and the other wants it shut. What am I to do, sir?"

Landlord: "Do what the gentleman says who hasn't dined yet, of course."

Englishmen as Foreign Waiters.

While in Petersburg we encountered an Englishman who was consumed with thirst.

"And I don't know the name of a single drink in their language," he said ruefully.

"Bluff it out," observed a member of our party. "Go into one of these cafés, and call for what you want as if you knew all about it."

He did so, but he tried to speak Russian, as he did French, by the natural method.

"*Viski!*" he said to the waiter.

"Certainly, sir. Scotch or Irish?" replied the Russian.

How She Said "Yes."

A Lancashire lady has been relating a rather pretty story about a factory girl's way of answering a marriage proposal made to her.

"The young woman could not write or read writing, and one day she brought a letter to me to read for her. It contained an offer of marriage.

"I happened to know that the writer was a deserving young artisan, so I said to her: 'Now, you must consider this matter very seriously, and if you like to come to me when you have made up your mind, I will write a reply for you.'

"A day or two afterwards I met the girl again and asked her if she wanted me to answer the letter for her. 'Oh, that is all right,' said she, looking radiant and pleased. 'I've settled it. I answered it myself.'

"'Why, how did you do it?' I asked.

"And then she told me that she could make a capital 'I,' and that she stuck on the paper a piece of wool after it for 'wull'—'I wool.'"

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THE REAL AND THE COUNTERFEIT.

"AND you say that the diamonds were very valuable?" interrogated a plainly dressed man, seated at one side of the table.

"Worth £5,000, Mr.—what may I call your name?" asked Harold Brewster.

"Oh—Smith," responded the man.

"Quite a common name that, but I suppose it will suffice as well as any," said Mr. Brewster.

"Precisely."

A short interval of silence then elapsed. It is quite evident that the two are studying one another; Mr. Brewster because the man is a stranger, and the latter because it is his calling. Finally Mr. Brewster broke the silence by asking:

"You are a detective?"

Smith acknowledged this by simply bowing.

"And you think, Mr. Smith, that you can help me to recover the jewels?"

"I can try——"

"So can any one of you try," quickly interrupted Brewster.

"Let me finish, please," said Smith. "When I try I generally succeed. If you wish my services, give me some points. Tell me who the diamonds belong to. Give me some explicit idea as to their forms, number, and the like. I cannot work in the dark and blindfolded, Mr. Brewster."

"That's a fact. Well, in the first place, the jewels are only family heirlooms. They consist of a pair of bracelets, eardrops, and a necklace. Ah! by the way, I can give you a better idea by these," said Mr. Brewster, taking from a drawer a box. He took the cover off, and there, ensconsed among downy cotton, was a perfect mass of glittering, shimmering jewels. Smith uttered an ejaculation of surprise as his eyes fell upon the sparkling gems.

"You seem surprised, Smith. Well, they are pretty fair counterfeits," said Brewster, as he laid the diamonds upon the table.

"Counterfeits, did you say?" asked Smith as he bent over to examine them.

"Precisely; they are but paste representations. They are the same in size and number as the originals; were made expressly for such an occasion as this. Please examine them closely, Mr. Smith, for by these we must recover the originals."

The detective took the pieces up one by one, and examined them closely. He counted the stones, noticed, the quaint, old-fashioned setting, which was intricate delicate, and a marvel of skilled handiwork.

"And you say these are 'bogus'?"

"Yes, sir. If the originals were here you could then compare the two sets."

"Who usually wore the real ones?"

"My daughter, which was seldom; for she is an invalid, and goes in society but little. Poor Lucy! She does not even know that the diamonds are missing."

"Does not know? What do you mean, Mr. Brewster?"

"The two sets were kept in a secret drawer in my desk at home—the originals in a plain white box; these in a blue box, as you see."

"Precisely. Go on."

"If possible I would like to recover the diamonds before my daughter finds out about the matter. You may proceed in your own manner, Mr. Smith. If you succeed in recovering the jewels and punishing the thief, I shall not hesitate to reward you handsomely."

"Of course, you will allow me to take these," said Smith, pointing to the counterfeits.

"Certainly; they are only paste," said Mr. Brewster, who laid the bogus jewels back into their downy nest.

Smith took the box, rose, buttoned his coat, and turned to leave, when he suddenly asked, as he looked over his shoulder.

"Does your daughter know of the existence of these bogus jewels?"

"She does."

"Let me see—you have a son?" inquired Mr. Smith.

"I have."

"Is he a member of the firm?"

"No, sir."

"What does he do?"

"Sir, my son is a gentleman of leisure."

"That's all; good!" and the door closed behind the officer's form.

Jack Smith was one of the best men in the force. He was sharp, cunning, and knew not the meaning of the word fear. As he wended his way from Harold Brewster's office he began to cogitate; to wonder if there was no possible light ahead concerning the case in hand.

Just as he was about to pass a jewellery store a sudden thought illuminated his mind.

He stepped in, and showing the bogus diamonds to the proprietor, asked him one question.

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When Jack Smith emerged from the door a strange look was upon his face, and he hugged the box more closely to his breast as he threaded the great throng.

Fred Brewster was one of those gay, petted darlings of society, of which London has a surfeit. He toiled not, neither did he spin, yet no one of the fashionable set in which he moved had finer raiment nor spent money more lavishly.

Perhaps if Fred had had some aim in life, his existence would not have been as vapid as it was. But, as the case stood, he was rapidly going to the dogs. He knew it, and his boon companions knew it; but he cared as little for his mistaken career as they did. He was petted by his mother, and sister, and his father condoned his many foibles by saying:

"Let the boy sow his wild oats; he'll settle down soon enough."

The young man gambled, was a frequenter of sporting circles of every description, and did not disdain to bet hundreds of pounds on a single race. Upon the evening following the interview between Harold Brewster and the detective, while Fred was in one of the noted gambling resorts in Soho, he found that a plainly-dressed man of middle-age was watching him closely.

It troubled him exceedingly, and made him careless in his play. The consequence was, when he rose from the table, he found that he had lost one hundred pounds. He went to the bar and called for brandy. After drinking it he took his departure. The middle-aged man who watched him so closely was at his heels.

"Look here, my man," said Fred, turning to the other when the pair had reached the street, "am I such an object of curiosity that you must needs keep your eyes upon me?"

"Be calm, Mr. Fred Brewster. I arrest you in the name of the law," said Jack Smith; for he it was, in one of his many disguises.

"Good Heavens! Arrest me! For what?" gasped the young man, starting back.

"No matter; come with me," simply returned Smith. The young man saw that it would be useless to offer resistance, and so he accompanied the officer. A strange expression of fear came over Fred Brewster's face when the officer told him to step into a pawnshop with him just off the Strand.

"The ticket, please," said Smith.

Fred trembled in every limb; his face was the picture of abject despair.

"What—what do you—mean?" he ejaculated.

"The pawn ticket for the diamonds," whispered the detective.

Fred took his pocket-book out, and extricating the slip of paper from its contents, passed it to Mr. Smith.

"Now, friend Jacob, I'll take that lot of diamonds in the white box, please," said Smith, handing the ticket to the Jew behind the counter.

"Yes, mine frent, but I must haf mine monish, five pounds, and one for de use of de monish," returned the Jew.

Smith handed him the required amount, and took the diamonds. After the pair had reached the street, the detective said to the astonished young man:

"Now, my young man, let me give you a piece of advice; mend your ways; change your manner of living, and be a man for your mother's sake."

"And am I at liberty?" asked Fred, as the other turned to leave.

"You are; go and do the right thing hereafter. But recollect there is one man who knows of your crime, and will not hesitate to use this incident against you if you ever give him occasion."

The next day, Harold Brewster was seated in his office. he was startled by the appearance of Smith, the detective.

"Ah, Smith, I see by your face that you have succeeded."

"I have; there are your diamonds," said Smith, laying the two boxes upon the table.

"I'm so happy! Are they not beauties?" asked Mr. Brewster, lifting the glittering jewels from the white box.

"They are fair," replied Smith smiling.

"Fair! What do you mean? They are worth five thousand pounds. Compare them with these," said Brewster, taking the jewels from the blue box.

"Suppose you tell me which are the originals and the genuine ones," said Smith.

Mr. Brewster looked up quickly and asked:

"What do you mean?"

"Simply this, Mr. Brewster—the real diamonds have not been stolen at all."

"Eh? not stolen? I—bless my soul! What do you mean, man?"

"It is the truth, Mr. Brewster. The boxes must have got changed, or rather the contents. You gave me the real diamonds, but I have recovered the bogus ones."

The listener was so thoroughly astonished that he could not speak at first. Finally he asked:

"How did you learn of it?"

Smith then told the astonished merchant how he had stepped into a jeweller's store and asked the proprietor to examine the jewels and tell him their value. He also told Mr. Brewster how he had found the paste gems in a pawnshop.

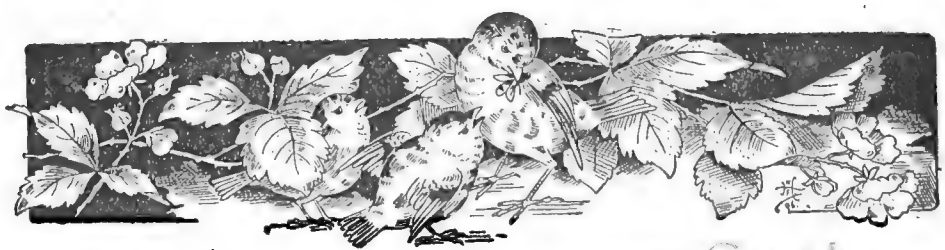
"And did you not capture the thief?" asked Mr. Brewster.

"Don't press that part of the case, Mr. Brewster, please. I think he has had a lesson."

After receiving remuneration for his services the detective took his departure.

Mr. Brewster never questioned his son because of his altered manner of living, but he imagined he knew the reason of Fred's change for the better.

W. C. M.



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THE ANGEL OF THE REVOLUTION

By GEORGE GRIFFITH

CHAPTER LXIII. (*continued*).

They descended together to the engine-room, and meanwhile the air-ship sank through the clouds until the lights of Aberdeen lay about a thousand feet below. A lens of red glass had been fitted to the searchlight of the *Ithuriel*, and all that was necessary was to connect the forward engine with the dynamo.

Arnold put Natasha's hand on a little lever. As she took hold of it she thought with a shudder of the mighty forces of destruction which her next movement would let loose. Then she thought of her mother, betrayed, degraded, and murdered amidst the snows of Siberia, of her father crippled in the prime of his life, and of all the nameless horrors of the rule whose death-signal she was about to give.

As she did so her grip tightened on the lever, and when Arnold, having given his orders to the head engineer as to speed and course, put his hand on her shoulder and said, "Now!" she pulled it back with a sharp, determined motion, and the next instant a broad fan of blood-red light shot over the *Ithuriel's* bows.

At the same moment the air-ship's propellers began to spin round, and with the flood of red light streaming in front of her, she headed her way full speed towards Edinburgh. The signal flashed over the Scottish capital, and then the *Ithuriel* swerved round to the westward.

Half-an-hour later Glasgow saw it, and then away she sped southward across the border to Carlisle, and so through the long December night she flew hither and thither, eastward and westward, flashing the red battle-signal over field and village and town, and wherever it shone armed men sprang up like the fruit of the fabled dragon's teeth, companies were mustered in streets and squares and fields and marched to railway stations, and soon long trains, one after another in endless succession, got into motion, all moving towards the south and east, all converging upon London.

Last of all, after it had made a swift circuit of northern and central and western England, the red light swept along the south coast, and then swerved northward again till it flashed thrice over London, and then it vanished into the darkness of the hour before the dawn of Armageddon.

Since the ever-memorable night of Thursday, the 29th of July, 1588, three hundred and sixteen years before, when "The beacon blazed upon the roof of Edgcumbe's lofty Hall," and the answering fires sprang up "From Eddystone to Berwick bounds, from Lynn to Milford Bay," to tell that the Spanish Armada was in sight, there had been no such night in England, nor had men ever dreamed that there should be.

But great as had been the deeds done by the heroes of the sixteenth century with the pigmy means at their command, they were but the merest child's play to the awful storm of destruction which, in a few hours, was to burst over southern England. Then it was England against Spain; now it was Anglo-Saxondom against the world; and the conquering race of earth, armed with the most terrific powers of destruction that human wit had ever devised, was rising in its wrath, millions strong, to wipe out the stain of invasion from the sacred soil of the Motherland of the Anglo-Saxon nations.

CHAPTER LXIV.

The Old Lion at Bay.

The morning of the 6th of December dawned grey and cold over London and the hosts that were waiting for its surrender. Scarcely any smoke rose from the myriad chimneys of the vast city, for the coal was almost all burnt, and what was left was selling at £12 a ton. Wood was so scarce that people were tearing up the wood-work of their houses to keep a little fire going.

So the steel-grey sky remained clear, for towards daybreak the clouds had been condensed by a cold north-easter into a sharp fall of fine, icy snow, and as the sun gained power it shone chilly over the whitened landscape, the innumerable roofs of London, and the miles of tents lining the hills to the north and south of the Thames valley.

The havoc wrought by the bombardment on the public buildings of the great city had been terrible. Of the Houses of Parliament only a shapeless heap of broken stones remained, the Law Courts were in ruins, what had been the Albert Hall was now a roofless ring of blackened walls, Nelson's Column lay shattered across Trafalgar Square, and the Royal Exchange, the Bank of England, and the Mansion House mingled their fragments in the heart of the almost deserted City.

Only three of the great buildings of London had suffered no damage. These were the British Museum, Westminster Abbey, and St. Paul's, which had been spared in accordance with special orders issued by the commanders of the League. The two former were spared for the same reason that the Germans had spared Strasburg Cathedral in 1870—because their destruction would have been a loss, not to Britain alone, but to the world.

The great church of the metropolis had been left untouched chiefly because it had been arranged that, on the fall of London, the Tsar was to be proclaimed Emperor of Asia under its dome, and at the same time General le Gallifet was to assume the Dictatorship of France and abolish the Republic, which for more than ten years had been the plaything of unprincipled financiers and the laughing-stock of Europe. As the sun rose the great golden cross, rising high out of the wilderness of houses, shone more and more brightly under the brightening sky, and millions of eyes looked upon it from within the City and from without with feelings far asunder as triumph and defeat.

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At daybreak the last meal had been eaten by the defenders of the City. To supply it almost every animal left in London had been sacrificed, and the last drop of liquor was drunk, even to the last bottle of wine in the Royal cellars, which the King shared with his two commanders-in-chief, Lord Roberts and Lord Wolseley, in the presence of the troops on the balcony of Buckingham Palace.

At nine o'clock the King and Queen attended service in St. Paul's, and when they left the Cathedral half-an-hour later the besiegers on the heights were astounded to hear the bells of all the steeples left standing in London ring out in a triumphant series of peals which rippled away eastward and westward from St. Paul's and Westminster Abbey, caught up and carried on by steeple after steeple, until from Highgate to Dulwich, and from Hammersmith to Canning Town, the beleagured and starving city might have been celebrating some great triumph or deliverance.

The astonished besiegers could only put the extraordinary manifestation down to joy on the part of the citizens at the near approaching end of the siege, but before the bells of London had been ringing for half-an-hour this fallacious idea was dispelled from their minds in a very stern and summary fashion.

Since nightfall there had been no communication with the secret agents of the League in the various towns of England and Scotland. At ten o'clock a small company of Cossacks spurred and flogged their jaded horses up the northern slope of Muswell Hill, on which the Tsar had fixed his headquarters. Nearly every man was wounded, and the horses were in the last stages of exhaustion.

Their captain was at once admitted to the presence of the Tsar, and, flinging himself on the ground before the enraged Autocrat, gasped out the dreadful tidings that his little company were the sole survivors of the army of occupation that had been left at Harwich, and which, twelve hours before, had been thirty thousand strong.

A huge fleet of strange-looking vessels flying a plain blood-red flag had just before forced the approaches to the harbour, sunk every transport and warship with guns that were fired without flame, or smoke, or report, and whose projectiles shattered everything that they struck. Immediately afterwards an immense flotilla of transports had steamed in, and, under the protection of these terrible guns, had landed a hundred thousand men, all dressed in the same plain grey uniform, with no facings or ornaments save a knot of red ribbon at the button-hole, and armed with magizine rifle and a bayonet, and a brace of revolvers. All were English by their speech, and every man appeared to know exactly what to do with very few orders from his officers.

This invading force had hunted the Russians out of Harwich like rabbits out of a warren, while the ships in the harbour had hurled their shells up into the air so that they fell back to earth on the retreating army and exploded with frightful effect. The general in command had at once telegraphed to London for a detachment of war-balloons and reinforcements, but no response had been received.

After four hours' fighting the Russian Army was in full retreat, while the attacking force was constantly increasing as transport after transport steamed into the harbour and landed her men. At Colchester the Russians had been met by another vast army which had apparently sprung from the earth, dressed and armed exactly as the invading force was. What its numbers were there was no possibility of telling.

By this time, too, treachery began to show itself in the Russian ranks, and whole companies suddenly appeared with the red knot of ribbon in their tunics, and instantly turned their weapons against their comrades, shooting them down without warning or mercy. No quarter had been given to those who did not show the ribbon. Most of them died fighting, but those who had thrown down their arms were shot down all the same.

Whoever commanded the strange army had manifestly given orders to take no prisoners, and it was equally certain that its movements were directed by the Terrorists, for everywhere the battle cries had been, "In the Master's name!" and "Slay and spare not!"

The whole of the army, save the deserters, had been destroyed, and the deserters had immediately assumed the grey uniforms of those of the Terrorist army who had fallen. The Cossack captain and his forty or fifty followers were the sole remains of a body of three thousand men who had fought their way through the second army. The whole country to the north and east seemed alive with the grey soldiery, and it was only after a hundred hair-breadth escapes that they had managed to reach the protection of the lines round London.

Such was the tale of the bringer of bad tidings to the Tsar at the moment when he was looking forward to the crowning triumph of his reign. Like the good soldier that he was, he wasted no time in thinking at a moment when everything depended on instant action.

He at once despatched a war-balloon to the French and Italian headquarters with a note containing the terrible news from Harwich, and requesting Generals le Gallifet and Cosenz to lose no time in communicating with the eastern and southern ports, and in throwing out corps of observation, supported by war-balloons. Evidently the American Government had played the League false at the last moment, and had allied herself with Britain.

As soon as he had sent off this message, the Tsar ordered a fleet of forty aerostats to proceed to the north-eastward in advance of a force of infantry and cavalry numbering three hundred thousand men, and supported by fifty batteries of field and machine-guns, which he detached to stop the progress of the Federation army towards London.

Before this force was in motion a reply came back from General le Gallifet to the effect that all communication with the south and east was stopped, and that an aerostat, which had been on scout duty during the night, had returned with the news that the whole country appeared to be up in arms from Portsmouth to Dover. Corps of observation and a fleet of thirty aerostats had been sent out, and three army corps were already on the march to the south and east.

Meanwhile, the hour for the surrender of London was drawing very near, and all the while the bells were sending their mingled melody of peals and carillons up into the clear frosty air with a defiant joyousness that seemed to speak of anything but surrender. As twelve o'clock approached the guns of all the batteries on the heights were loaded and trained on different parts of the city, and the whole of the forces left after the detachment of the armies that had been sent to engage the battalions of the Federation prepared to descend upon the devoted city from all sides after the two hours' incessant bombardment that had been ordered to precede the general attack.

It had been arranged that if the city surrendered a white flag was to be hoisted on the cross of St. Paul's.

Within a few minutes of twelve the Tsar ascended to the roof of the Alexandra Palace on Muswell Hill, and turned his field glasses on the towering dome. His face and lips were bloodless with repressed but intense anxiety, but the hands that held the glasses to his eyes were as steady as though he had been watching a review of his own troops.

It was the supreme moment of his victorious career. He was practically master of Europe. Only Britain held out. The relieving forces would be rent in fragments by his war-balloons, and then decimated by his troops as the legions of Germany and Austria had been. The capital of the English-speaking world lay starving at his feet, and a few minutes would see——

Ha! there goes the flag at last. A little ball of white bunting creeps up from the gallery over the dark dome. It clears the railing under the pedestal, and climbs to the apex of the shining cross. As it does so the wild chorus of the bells suddenly ceases, and out of the silence that follows

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some the deep booming strokes of the great bell of St. Paul's sounding the hour of twelve.

As the last stroke dies away the ball bursts, and the White Ensign of Britain crossed by the red cross of St. George, and with the Jack in the corner, floats out defiantly on the breeze, greeted by the re-awakening clamour of the bells, and a deep hoarse cry from millions of throats, that rolls like a vast sea of sound up the slopes to the encampments of the League.

With an irrepressible cry of rage, Alexander dashed his field-glass to the ground, and shouted, in a voice broken with passion:

"So! They have tricked us. Let the bombardment begin at once, and bring that flag down with the first shots!"

But before the words were out of his mouth the bombardment had already commenced in a very different fashion from that in which he had intended that it should begin. So intense had been the interest with which all eyes had been turned on the Cross of St. Paul's that no one had noticed twelve little points of shining light hanging high in air over the batteries of the besiegers, six to the north and six to the south.

But the moment that the Ensign of St. George floated from the summit of St. Paul's a rapid series of explosions roared out like a succession of thunderclaps along the lines of the batteries. The hills of Surrey, and Kent, and Middlesex were suddenly transformed into volcanoes spouting flame and thick black smoke, and flinging clouds of dust and fragments of darker objects high into the air.

The order of the Tsar was obeyed in part only, for by the time that the word to recommence the bombardment had been flashed round the circuit of the entrenchments more than half the batteries had been put out of action. The twelve air-ships stationed at equal intervals round the vast ellipse, and discharging their No. 3 shell from their four guns ahead and astern, from an elevation of four thousand feet, had simultaneously wrecked half the batteries of the besiegers before their occupants had any clear idea of what was really happening.

Wherever one of those shells fell and burst, earth, and stone, and iron melted into dust under the terrific force of the exploding gases, and the air-ships, moving with a velocity compared with which the utmost speed of the aerostats was as a snail's pace, flitted hither and thither wherever a battery got into action and destroyed it before the second round had been fired.

There were still twenty-five aerostats at the command of the Tsar which had not been sent against the relieving forces, and as soon as it was realised that the aeriel bombardment of the batteries came from the air-ships of the Terrorist fleet they were sent into the air to engage them at all hazards. They outnumbered them two to one, but there was no comparison between the manœuvring powers of the two aerial squadrons.

As soon as the aerostats rose into the air the Terrorist fleet receded northward and southward from the batteries. Their guns had a six-mile range, and it did not matter to them which side of the assailed area they lay. They could still hurl their explosives with the same deadly precision on the appointed mark. But with the aerostats it was a very different matter. They could only drop their shells vertically, and where they were not exactly above the object of attack, their shells exploded with comparative harmlessness.

Thus the Terrorist fleet, sweeping hither and thither, in wide and ever-changing curves, lured the most dangerous foes of the beleagured city farther and farther away from the real scene of action at the very time when they were most urgently needed to support the attacking forces which at that moment were being poured into London.

To destroy the air-ships seemed an impossibility, since they could move at five times the speed of the swiftest aerostat, and yet to return to the bombardment of the city was to leave them free to commit what havoc they pleased upon the encampments of the armies of the League. So they were drawn farther and farther away, while their agile enemies, still keeping within their six-mile range, evaded their shells, and yet kept up a constant discharge of their own projectiles upon the salient points of the attack on London.

By four o'clock in the afternoon all the batteries of the besiegers had been put out of action by the aerial bombardment. It was now a matter of man to man and steel to steel, and so the gauge of final battle was accepted, and as dusk began to fall over the beleagured city the Russian, French, and Italian hosts left their lines and descended from their vantage ground to the assault on London, where the old Lion at bay was waiting for them with claws bared and teeth grinning defiance.

CHAPTER LXV.

The Turn of the Battle-Tide.

The force which the Tsar had detached to operate against the Federation Army of the North left the headquarters at eleven o'clock and proceeded in four main divisions by Edmonton, Chingford, Chigwell, and Romford. The aerostats, regulating their speed so as to keep touch with the land force, maintained a position two miles ahead of it at three thousand feet elevation.

Strict orders had been given to press on at the utmost speed and to use every means to discover the Federationists and bring them to an engagement with as little delay as possible, but they marched on hour after hour into the dusk of the early winter evening with the sounds of battle growing fainter in their rear without meeting with a sign of the enemy.

As it would have been the height of imprudence to have advanced in the dark into a hostile country occupied by an enemy of great but unknown strength, General Pralitzin, the Commander of the Russian force, decided to bring his men to a halt at nightfall, and therefore took up a series of positions between Cheshunt, Epping, Chipping Ongar, and Ingatestone. From these points squadrons of Cossacks scoured the country in all directions, north, east, and west, in search of the so far invisible enemy; and at the same time he sent mounted messengers back to headquarters to report that no enemy had been found, and to ask for further orders.

The aerostats slowed down their engines until their propellers just counteracted the force of the wind, and they hung motionless at a height of a thousand feet, ranged in a semi-circle about fifteen miles long over the heads of the columns.

All this time the motions of the Russian army had been watched by the captain of the *Ithuriel* from an elevation of eight thousand feet five miles to the rear. As soon as he saw them making preparations for a halt, and had noticed the disposition of the aerostats, he left the conning-tower which he had occupied nearly all day, and went into the after-saloon, where he found Natas and Natasha examining a large plan of London and its environs.

"They have come to a halt at last," he said, "and if they only remain where they are for three hours longer, we have the whole army like rats in a trap, war-balloons and all. They have not seen us so far, for if they had they would certainly have sent an aerostat aloft to reconnoitre, and, of course, I must have destroyed it. The whole forty are arranged in a semi-circle over the heads of the four main columns in divisions of ten."

"And what do you propose to do with them now you have got them?" said Natasha, looking up with a welcoming smile.

"Give me a cup of coffee first, for I am cold to the marrow, and then I'll tell you," replied Arnold, seating himself at the table, on which stood a coffee-urn with a spirit lamp beneath it, something after the style of a Russian samovar.

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Natasha filled a cup and passed it to him, and he went on:

"You remember what I said to Tremayne in the Princess's sitting-room at Petersburg about the eagle and the crows just before the trial of the Tsar's first war-balloons. Well, if you like to spend a couple of hours with me in the conning-tower as soon as it is dark enough for us to descend I will show you what I meant then. I suppose the original general orders stand good?" he said, turning to Natas.

"Yes," replied the Master gravely. "They must all be destroyed. This is the day of vengeance and not of mercy. If my orders have been obeyed, all the men belonging to the International in this force will have managed to get to the ear by nightfall. They can be left to take care of themselves. Mazanoff assured me that all the members in the armies of the League fully understood what they are to do. Some of the war-balloons have been taken possession of by our men, and we don't know how many. As soon as you destroy the first of the fleet, these will rise and commence operations on the army, and they will also fly the red flag, so there will be no fear of your mistaking them."

"Very well," said Arnold, who had been quietly sipping his coffee while he listened to the utterance of this death sentence on more than a quarter of a million of men. "If our fellows to the northward only obey orders promptly, there will not be many of the Russians left by sunrise. Now, Natasha, you had better put on your furs and come to the conning-tower; it's about time to begin."

It did not take her many moments to wrap up, and within five minutes she and Arnold were standing in the conning-tower watching the camp fires of the Russian host coming nearer and nearer as the *Ithuriel* sank down through the rapidly increasing darkness towards the long dotted line which marked the position of the aerostats, whose great gas-holders stood out black and distinct against the whitened earth beneath them.

By means of electric signals to the engineers the captain of the *Ithuriel* was able to regulate both the speed and the elevation of the air-ship as readily as though he had himself been in charge of the engine-room. Giving Natasha a pair of night glasses, and telling her to keep a bright look-out ahead, he brought the *Ithuriel* round by the westward to a position about five miles west of the extremity of the line of war-balloons, and as soon as he got on a level with it he advanced comparatively slowly until Natasha was able to make it out distinctly with the night glass.

Then he signalled to the wheel-house aft to disconnect the after-wheel, and at the same moment he took hold of the spokes of the forward wheel in the conning-tower. The next signal was "Full speed ahead," and as the *Ithuriel* gathered way and rushed forward on her errand of destruction he said hurriedly to Natasha:

"Now don't speak till it's over. I want all my wits for this work, and you'll want all your eyes."

Without speaking Natasha glanced up at his face, and saw on it somewhat of the same expression that she had seen at the moment when he put the *Ariel* at the rock-wall which barred the entrance to Aeria. His face was pale, and his lips were set, and his eyes looked straight out from under his frowning brows with an angry gleam in them that boded ill for the fate of those against whom he was about to use the irresistible engine of destruction under his command.

Twenty feet in front of them stretched out the long keen ram of the air-ship, edged and pointed like a knife. This was the sole weapon that he intended to use. It was impossible to train the guns at the tremendous speed at which the *Ithuriel* was travelling, but under the circumstance the ram was the deadliest weapon that could have been employed.

In four minutes from the time the *Ithuriel* started on her eastward course the nearest war-balloon was only fifty yards away. The air-ship, travelling at a speed of nearly two hundred miles an hour, leapt out of the dusk like a flash of white light. In ten seconds more her ram had passed completely through the gasholder without so much as a shock being felt. The next one was only five hundred yards away. Obedient to her rudder the *Ithuriel* swerved, ripped her gasholder from end to end, and then darted upon the next one even before a terrific explosion in their rear told that the car of the first one had struck the earth.

So she sped along the whole line, darting hither and thither in obedience to the guiding hand that controlled her, with such inconceivable rapidity that before any of the unwieldy machines, saving only those whose occupants had been prepared for the assault, had time to get out of the way of the destroying ram, she had rent her way through the gas-holders of twenty-eight out of the forty balloons and flung them to the earth to explode and spread consternation and destruction all along the van of the army encamped below.

From beginning to end the attack had not lasted ten minutes. When the last of the aerostats had gone down under his terrible ram Arnold signalled "Stop and ascend," to the engine-room. A second signal turned on the search-light in the bow, and from this a rapid series of flashes were sent up to the sky to the northward and eastward.

The effect was as fearful as it was instantaneous. The twelve war-balloons which had escaped by flying the red flag took up their positions above the Russian lines, and began to drop their fire-shell and cyanogen bombs upon the masses of men below. The air-ship, swerving round again to the westward, with her fan wheels aloft, moved slowly across the wild area over which men and horses were wildly rushing hither and thither in vain attempts to escape the rain of death that was falling upon them from the sky.

Her search-light, turned downwards to the earth, sought out the spots where they were crowded most thickly together, and then the air-ship's guns came into play also. Arnold had given orders to use the new fire-shell exclusively, and its effects proved to be frightful beyond description. Wherever one fell a blaze of intense light shone for an instant upon the earth. Then this burst into a thousand fragments, which leapt into the air and spread themselves far and wide in all directions, burning with inextinguishable fury for several minutes, and driving men and horses mad with agony and terror.

No human fortitude or discipline could withstand the fearful rain of fire, in comparison with which even the deadly hail from the aerostats seemed insignificant. For half-an-hour the eight guns of the *Ithuriel* hurled these awful projectiles in all directions, scattering death and hopeless confusion wherever they alighted, until the whole field of carnage seemed ablaze with them.

At the end of this time three rockets soared up from her deck into the dark sky, and burst into myriads of brilliant white stars, which for a few moments shed an unearthly light upon the scene of indescribable confusion and destruction below. But they made more than this visible, for by their momentary light could be seen seemingly interminable lines of grey-clad figures swiftly closing in from all sides, chasing the Cossack scouts before them in upon the completely disorganised Russian host.

A few minutes later a continuous roll of musketry burst out on front, flank, and rear, and a ceaseless hail of rifle bullets began to plough its way through the helpless masses of the soldiers of the Tsar. They formed as well as they could to confront these new enemies, but the moment that the search-light of the air-ship, constantly sweeping the field, fell upon a company in anything like order a shell descended in the midst of it and broke it up again.

All night long the work of death and vengeance went on, the grey lines ever closing nearer and nearer upon the dwindling remnants of the Russian army. Hour after hour the hail of bullets never slackened. There was no random firing on the part of the Federation soldiers. Every man had been trained to use his rifle rapidly but deliberately,

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and never to fire until he had found his mark; and the consequence was that the long nickel-tipped bullets, fired point-blank into the dense masses of men, rent their way through half-a-dozen bodies before they were spent.

At last the grey light began to break over such a scene of carnage as human eyes had never before gazed upon. Scarcely ten thousand men remained of the three hundred thousand who had started the day before in obedience to the order of the Tsar; and these were split up into formless squads and ragged companies fighting desperately, amidst heaps of corpses, for dear life, without any pretence at order or formation.

The cannonade from the air had ceased, and the last scene in the drama of death had come. With bayonets fixed and rifles lowered to the charge, the long grey lines closed up, and, as the bugles rang out the long-awaited order, they swept forward at the double, horses and men went down like a field of standing corn under the irresistible rush of half a million bayonets, and in twenty minutes all was over. Not a man of the whole Russian army was left alive, save those whose knot of red ribbon at the button-hole proclaimed them members of the International.

As soon as it was light enough for Arnold to see clearly that the fate of the Russians was finally decided, he descended to the earth, and, after complimenting the commander and officers of the Federation troops on the splendid effectiveness of their force, and their admirable discipline and coolness, he gave orders for a two hours' rest and then a march on the Russian headquarters at Muswell Hill with every available man. The Tsar and his staff were to be taken alive at all hazards; every other Russian who did not wear the International ribbon was to be shot down without mercy.

These orders given, the *Ithuriel* mounted into the air again and disappeared in the direction of London. She passed over the now shattered and silent entrenchments of the Russians at a speed which made it possible to remain on deck without discomfort or danger and at an elevation of two thousand feet. Natas was below in the saloon, alone with his own thoughts, the thoughts of twenty-five years of waiting and working and gradual approach to the hour of vengeance which was now so near. Andrew Smith was steering in the wheel-house, Lieutenant Marston was taking his watch below, after being on deck nearly the whole of the previous night, and Arnold and Natasha, wrapped in their warm furs, were pacing up and down the deck engaged in conversation which had not altogether to do with the war.

The sun had risen before the *Ithuriel* passed over London, and through the clear, cold air they could see with their field-glasses signs of carnage and destruction which made Natasha's soul sicken within her to gaze upon them, and even shook Arnold's now hardened nerves.

All the main thoroughfares leading into London from the north and south were choked with heaps of dead bodies in Russian, French, and Italian uniforms, in the midst of which those who still survived were being forced forward by the pressure of those behind. Every house that remained standing was spouting flames upon them from its windows, and where the streets opened into squares and wider streets there were barricades manned by British and Federation troops, and from their summits and loopholes the quick-firing guns were raining an incessant hail of shot and shell upon the struggling masses pent up in the streets.

A horrible chorus of the rattle of small arms, the harsh, grinding roar of the machine guns, the hurrahs of the defenders, and the cries of rage and agony from the baffled and decimated assailants rose unceasingly to their ears as they passed over the last battlefield of the western nations, where the Anglo-Saxon, the Russ, and the Gaul, were locked in the death struggle.

"There is some awful work going on down there," said Arnold, as they headed away towards the south, where,

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from behind the Surrey hills soon came the sound of some tremendous conflict. "For the present we must leave them to fight it out. They don't seem to have had such easy work of it to the south as we have had to the north, but I didn't expect they would, for they have probably detached a very much larger force of French and Italians to attack the Army of the South than the Russian lot we had to deal with."

"Is all this frightful slaughter really necessary?" asked Natasha, slipping her arm through his and looking up at him with eyes which for the first time were moistened by the tears of pity for her enemies.

"Necessary or not," replied Arnold, "it is the Master's orders, and I have only to obey them. This is the day of vengeance for which he has waited so long, and you can hardly expect him to show much mercy. It lies between him and Tremayne. For my part I will stay my hand only when I am ordered to do so.

"Still, if anyone can influence Natas to mercy, you can. Nothing can now stop the slaughter on the north, I'm afraid, for the Russians are caught in a hopeless trap. The Londoners are enraged beyond control, and if the men spared them I believe the women would tear them to pieces. But there are two millions of lives or so to be saved at the south, and perhaps there is still time to do it. It would be a task worthy of the Angel of the Revolution; why should you not try it?"

"I will do so," said Natasha, and without another word she turned away and walked quickly towards the entrance to the saloon.

(To be continued.)

Said One Shopper: "Oh, I saw just the loveliest, sweetest, prettiest baby a minute ago."

Said the Other Shopper: "What! Do you mean to tell me that stupid nurse has dared to bring out my little darling such a day as this?"

"Did you know that I passed your door last evening?" said the young man tenderly.

"Of course," replied the beautiful girl, with reproach in her glistening eyes. "Do you think I would not know your step?"

"Certainly," said the happy young man, as he directed the conversation away from the subject, and avoided remarking that he had passed the door in a cab.

WHAT A GLORIOUS DAY
IT WILL BE WHEN
THE BRITISH FLAG
FLOATS OVER PRETORIA!
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IT WILL BE FOR
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No. 4.—First prize of 10s. has been awarded to Mr. A. H. L. Smith, of 5 Farm Road, Hove, Brighton. A copy of "Guilty Gold," by Headon Hill, to each of the following: Miss Richardson, Bedale; A. Ward, Portsmouth; Dav. Ryan, jun., Dublin; Miss K. Zerfahs, Upper Holloway, N.; Rev. S. Yelland Richards, Cardiff.

No. 5.—First prize of 10s. has been awarded to Mr. J. F. Spencer, 134 Rice Lane, Walton, Liverpool. A solid silver pencil-case to each of the following: A. H. Tyler, Lowestoft; Geo. Templeton, Belfast; Miss A. Sweet, Taunton; Miss O'Connor, Wolverhampton; E. Gregory, Manchester.

No. 6.—First prize of 10s. has been awarded to Mr. Granville P. Higgs, of "St. Elmo," Lancaster Avenue, Hadley Wood, Middlesex. A copy of "Athelstane Ford," by Allen Upward, to each of the following: K. Moyse, Windsor; E. Parry, Cheadle, Gloucester; Jos. Marshall, Hastings; R. Patterson, Newcastle-on-Tyne; T. Lawson Alexander, Edinburgh.

No. 7.—First prize of 10s. has been awarded to Miss Mabel Laws, of 22 Marlborough Row, Portsea, Portsmouth. A solid silver pencil-case to each of the following: J. B. Whitlock, East Dulwich; C. Osborn, Norwich; J. H. Cockerill, London, N.; J. J. McCormick, Dublin; Miss B. Rendle, Devonport.

No. 8—First prize of 10s. has been awarded to Mr. Jas. H. Baker, of 59 Greyfriars Lane, Coventry. A copy of "Fortune's My Foe," by J. Bloundelle Burton, has been sent to each of the following: W. H Lomas, Manchester; P. H. Lewis, Stoke-on-Trent; John Boyd, Glasgow; W. S. Moss, Birkenhead; Miss A. Walker, Whitby, Yorkshire.

No. 9.—First prize of 10s. has been awarded to Mr. Jas. Mitchell, of 5 Belfield Terrace, Musselburgh. A solid silver pencil-case has gone to: Jas. Matthews, Chiswich, W.; J. White, Liverpool; A. Vane, Rochdale; J. E. Donnelly, Swansea; E. Holdsworth, Bradford.

No. 10.—First prize of 10s. has been awarded to Miss Dove, of Woodcroft, Malmesbury Road, South Woodford. A copy of the "An Incidental Bishop," by Grant Allen, to: H. B. Thompson, Bracknell, Berks; R. Wells, Uppingham; Miss E. M. Cramphorn, Leytonstone, Essex; Mrs. Symons, Thornton Heath; Miss M. Pitman, Guildford.

No. 11.—First prize of 10s. has been awarded to Mr. W. Harvey Bailey, of 54 Milton Street, Westoe, South Shields. A solid silver pencil-case to: C. W. Anderson, Hatcham, S.E.; Mrs. M. A. Taylor, Sunbury Common; J. Pletts, Chelmsford; J. Henderson, jun., Perth; W. Wilkinson, Blackburn.

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The Brain Gymnasium.

On this page, under the title, "The Brain Gymnasium," appear each week a series of puzzles calculated to occupy the attention of the competitors, with interest and profit to themselves, during the long winter evenings. Many of the tasks set will be comparatively easy of solution, while others will be designed with a view to taxing the abilities of the most proficient in this direction.

In these competitions a prize of £2 will be awarded each week to the sender of the greatest number of correct solutions, and to the senders of the ten next highest number of correct ones will be presented either one of our silver-plated pencil cases or a copy of a popular six-shilling novel. Write all your solutions on one sheet of paper, putting the number against each. Post the batch in an envelope marked "Brain Gymnasium," to reach the Editor, Short Stories, 18 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, W.C., by Monday, February 5th, 1900.

No. 28.

Make eleven strokes to express the difference between two words, one of which is the name of a game, and the other "to whirl."

No. 29.

Replace words signifying "to fasten" and "disjointed" with words having the same meanings, add a personal pronoun, and a well-known American geographical name will be formed.

No. 30.

My First consists of countless particles;
My Second has neither beginning nor end;
My Third delights a hungry man;
My Whole is a place made famous by royalty.

No. 31.

What well-known line by Pope is hidden in the following:

A A A A E E E 50 G G G H I I I 50 I N N N N O R 50 R S S T T T U 500.

No. 32.

Form a word-square from the following letters so that one of the diagonals signifies "achievement":

A A A A A D D E E K R R R R R W.

No. 33.

C
D Rearrange E
E the surrounding I
I letters so that, commen- L
K cing from one corner, a well- L
N known author's name and the O
title of one of his works can be read.
R S S T T V W

SOLUTIONS TO COMPETITIONS

Appearing in No. 576, January 13th, 1900.

No. 12.

Pontefract.
Hull.
Taunton.
Halifax.
Ipswich.
Sandringham.
Itchen.
Salisbury.

No. 13.

Sprints, Spins, Pin.

No. 14.

PENny.
trAde.
teNet.
siDle.
drINK.

No. 15.

ArBour.
Ship.
TeRm.
OsMund.
Noise.
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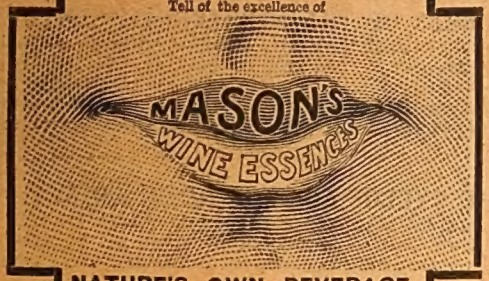

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50	Jones' Sewing Machines value £8 each	400	0	0
50	Sellers' Labour-saving Washers, with Rubber Wringer complete, value £3 each	150	0	0
50	Gents' Gold-filled Waltham Lever (Keyless) Watches, value £2 10/- each	125	0	0
50	Cash Prizes of £2 each	100	0	0
300	Ladies' Sterling Silver Watches, value 30/- each	450	0	0
300	Cash Prizes of £1 each	300	0	0
700	Gents' Umbrellas, value 15/- each	525	0	0
700	Ladies' Umbrellas, value 15/- each	525	0	0
300	Silver-plated Cruets, value 10/- each	150	0	0
500	Ladies' Gun-metal Watches, value 10/- each	250	0	0
500	Gents' Gun-metal Watches, value 10/- each	250	0	0
300	Ladies' Umbrellas, value 7/6 each	112	10	0
500	Cash Prizes of 5/- each	125	0	0
500	Boxes of Games (comprising 8 games, value 5/- each)	125	0	0
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